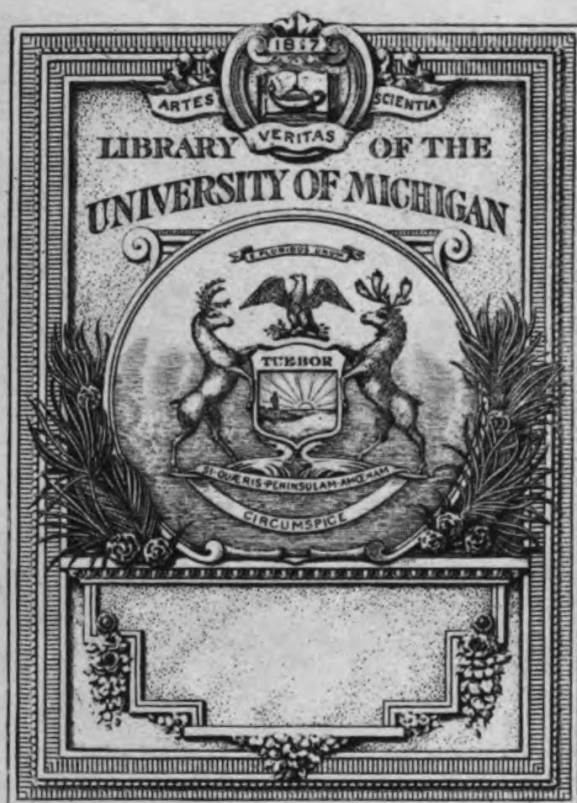


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# THEY'LL NEVER QUIT





# THEY'LL NEVER QUIT

By  
HARVEY KLEMMER

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THIS book has not been censored. I purposely waited until I had left England before writing it, as, although I sympathize with Britain in her struggle against the Nazis, I did not wish to be hampered in my efforts to present to the people of America a true picture of the Blitzkrieg.

No information contained in this book was secured as a result of my official connection with the American Embassy in London. The opinions expressed are, of course, my own.

THE AUTHOR

*Washington, D. C.  
February 6, 1941.*



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# THEY'LL NEVER QUIT



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## *Chapter I*

# BLITZKRIEG

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ON SEPTEMBER 7, 1940, at five o'clock in the afternoon, a fleet of German planes swept up the Thames Estuary to the East End of London. They showered incendiaries on the warehouses—and the houses—of dockland. Three and one-half hours later the heavy bombers came. The Blitzkrieg was on.

Not that this was Britain's first experience of German bombers. They had been coming over for months. Bombs had been dropped many times in the South and the Southeast of England, in Wales, in the Midlands, in Scotland. The attacks, however, had been spread out and sporadic. It was very obvious, on the night of September 7, that the war had entered a new phase.

We should have known what to expect. As recently as September 4, Hitler had threatened Britain with indiscriminate bombing in retaliation for the Royal Air Force raids on Germany. Now the threat was to be fulfilled.

It was just tea-time when the first planes arrived. They came in five waves. There must have been 500 of them altogether. The streets were jammed with throngs of Saturday afternoon shoppers. Men sat in the pubs enjoying thick beer, grimy pipes, and an occasional game of darts. Children played wherever there was room for them to play. Four thousand people were watching a football game in one field and, at another nearby, 6,000 milled about a greyhound track. Nobody paid much attention to the siren. It had gone many times before and, as before, undoubtedly would be followed by the All Clear in a little while.

It wasn't. This raid soon took on a character different from the others. Perhaps it was the savage fashion in which the Nazis fought their way into the city. The fact that it was Saturday also probably had something to do with the feeling of dread which gradually spread through the East End. Hitler almost always pulled his coups on week-ends. The Germans had been talking for a long time about the fate which they were preparing for Britain. Were they about to translate these threats into action?



It developed they were. To the east and to the southeast the guns began to roar. Little white rings of smoke took shape in the sky. Sometimes they materialized one at a time. At other times a group of them would spring into view. A wave of sound, a dreadful, angry sound like the buzzing of millions of bees, rolled over the city.

Suddenly, over the rings, the bombers appeared. Until one has actually seen their handiwork, and felt the destructive force of their cargoes, it is impossible to appreciate the deadliness of these machines. They look like toys suspended from invisible threads. In battle, they seem to swim like tiny silver fish. There were about 50 in this first school, heavily protected by fighters. The smoke rings covered the sky until it looked like an inverted bowl plastered with wisps of cotton. The bombers came on, and began to unload.

There was no fooling now. This was the real thing. People who had been gaping in the street, took cover. Women hustled their children off to the nearest shelters. Bomb after bomb fell. Planes came in from all directions. Three bombs fell on the greyhound track. People dived under the stands, or lay down on their seats. Splinters flew in all directions. Women fainted. One bomb fell just behind the kennels. The dogs were frightened, but unhurt. One of the kennel doors was blown open and a dog escaped into the paddock.

Two raiders attacked a train. They dived down to a height of about sixty feet and then raked the train with machine-gun fire. The train continued its journey.

Meanwhile, English planes had arrived to give battle. They sailed into the enemy formations, scattering them, pouring lead into them, driving them off. People cheered in the streets as the first Nazi bomber crashed to earth in a cloud of black smoke. Several machines were seen to be hit by bursting shells. Five pilots bailed out in the space of a few minutes and floated to earth. A wave of enemy machines disappeared to the northwest; another wave came in from the southeast.

Again the barrage went into action. Again the Spitfires and Hurricanes swept to the attack. A Nazi came screaming to earth with a noise like that of an automobile with faulty brakes sliding down a mountain. Two more parachutes fluttered open and sank gently over the rooftops with their dangling black specks.

The Germans lost 103 planes altogether, about one in five of those which came over. The R.A.F. was reported to have lost twenty-two planes.

It was a good day for the R.A.F. Unfortunately, it was a bad day for London. The raiders had succeeded in starting numerous fires among the warehouses, elevators and oil storage tanks of the East End. These fires spread rapidly and merged into

an inferno. One fire was a mile long. The sky over London became a vast pool of light. The Germans had lost heavily, in both machines and men. They had done little human damage in their tea-time raid. They had, however, achieved their principal objective. They had set London on fire. This city, which for twelve months had been hiding in the black-out, was now a gigantic beacon. German bombers waited in the fields of Northern France. As soon as it was dark, they returned to the attack.

The Nazis now had it all their own way. It required no navigation to find London. The flames must have been visible for a hundred miles. The Nazis had only to point the noses of their machines toward the light, come in over the swirling smoke, and drop their bombs. Some of the bombs would start new fires. Others would spread the existing blaze. Buildings that have been blown to pieces light easily and burn rapidly. An occasional gas tank, paint factory, or lumber yard helps things along.

Several of the oil tanks along the Thames went up. Warehouses filled with valuable stores, including food, were destroyed. The Rotherhithe docks caught fire. The river turned into a stream of molten metal, red and sluggish. The town began to look, at one and the same time, like something out of the Dark Ages and those pictures of the next war so often depicted by H. G. Wells. The sky

turned pink, then red, then white. The light rose and fell as though controlled by a giant rheostat. The glow spread down the river and then westward to engulf the whole city. A strong breeze sprang up. It seemed that London must be doomed.

But London was not doomed. In some way, how it will never be known, the civil defense workers kept the fire at bay. This city, which had survived three great catastrophes, was to surmount yet another.

The night raiders, unlike those which had come over in the afternoon, came singly or in pairs. The searchlight operators sought frantically to pierce the fiery sky. It was a hopeless task. London lay naked in the night. The bombers droned on. Sometimes they came at the rate of one a minute. The thud of bombs and the bursts of anti-aircraft fire merged into a dreadful discord which made sleep impossible. Later, the citizens of London were to adapt themselves to this nightly horror and to get enough sleep to keep going. Only the old and the very young were to get any sleep this night.

Bombs fell on a roadway, fracturing a gas main. Another fire sprang up. Shell fragments whined through the night, hot and jagged. Houses were blown to pieces, taking their occupants with them. Many, not hit, collapsed from blasts, burying human beings under tons of rubble. Death came into

the little homes of the workers. Death pursued them in the streets, and sought them out in their shelters. Throughout the long night, the work of destruction went on.

Fully 500 planes took part in the afternoon raid. There is no way of knowing how many came over during the eight terrible hours of the night raid. The chances are that there were at least 300, perhaps another 500. The Nazis dropped, altogether about 3,000,000 pounds of bombs, one of the most ferocious assaults in the history of warfare, and probably the most devastating ever made upon a civilian population.

Dawn brought an opportunity to take stock of the damage. Several military objectives had been hit, including some very good ones. Factories were fired. Damage was done to the lighting and other public services, and some dislocation of transport was caused. The docks had been battered, and considerable food and lumber destroyed. The major damage, however, had been done to people, to their homes and the institutions which they had erected in the pursuit of community life. A school was hit. So were a convent, a variety theater, a Salvation Army hostel. Three hundred and six people, principally elderly men, and women and children, were dead. And in the hospitals, themselves battered by bombs, lay the seriously injured, those suffering from concussion, crushed by falling

masonry, torn by the jagged splinters of shells. There were 1,337 of these. A number of them later died. A large number, horribly maimed, will never live again.

The Blitzkrieg was on. London was to share the fate of Madrid, Barcelona, Warsaw and Rotterdam. It turned out that London was to suffer more than any of the others; she was, in fact, to endure the greatest assault inflicted on any city—with the possible exception of Chungking—in modern times. Her citizens were to be killed and maimed by thousands, and driven from their homes in tens of thousands. Her streets were to become a shambles. Hospitals, churches, schools and museums were to be destroyed. All these things, and many more, were to come to pass in this ancient city which, for 1,900 years, has sprawled in the valley of the Thames. Yet, London was to endure.

And will endure. The British will never yield this city. They may yield a pile of ashes, a hole in the ground, but they will never surrender London. The English are sentimental about old things, but they will allow their capital to be destroyed rather than have it fall into the hands of the Nazis. The "scorched earth" left behind by retreating Communists in China will look like an oasis compared to what the Nazis will find if they ever get to London. The English will fight on to the last man and the last stone. They'll never quit.



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## *Chapter 2*

# BRITAIN AT BAY

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IT WAS no accident that the first blow of the Blitzkrieg fell on the people of London's East End. Hitler always has shown an uncanny ability for combining the military, diplomatic and political aspects of an attack. It had long been bruited about the capitals of Europe that, when the Germans moved against Britain, they would strike first at the poorer areas, in the hope of driving a wedge between the workers and the government. Britain had little protection against the sort of punishment that the German Air Force could dish out. The Nazis knew this, and intelligent people among the British also knew it. Hitler probably reasoned that the workers were the weak spot in

British society and that, if he could break their morale, the war would be won.

There were several things that would make his task easier. One was the fact that, whereas the rich had gone to their country places, the poor were still in London and more or less compelled to stay there and take it. The government had sponsored an evacuation scheme, to be sure, but for various reasons it had not worked out very well and, outside of a few children, the people of the East End were still living in their crumbly cottages down by the warehouses and the docks and the oil depots. There was also the matter of defense. The complacent gentlemen who preceded Churchill in the government had led the public to believe that everything was hunky-dory, and that the Germans would have a tough time if they came over Britain. The R.A.F. had succeeded in holding the Nazis by day, to be sure, but the people were in for a rude awakening with regard to night raids. Hitler undoubtedly thought, and with much justification, that the masses would feel they had been betrayed and would, therefore, rise in a fury and destroy the government.

Hitler was wrong. The people of London's East End took everything that the Germans had to offer. They took one of the most terrible beatings ever inflicted on a civilian population, and came back for more. David Low, the great English

cartoonist, drew a picture of German bombs beating fruitlessly against the Cockney heart. It was a picture that told, in a few bold strokes, the whole story of the first days of the Blitzkrieg against Britain.

The Nazis let it be known that Goering had assumed personal charge of the Blitzkrieg. Half an hour before black-out time on the second night, he made a broadcast to the German people.

"A terrific attack is going on against London," he said. "Adolf Hitler has entrusted me with the task of attacking the heart of the British Empire. From where I stand I can see waves of planes headed for England."

A few minutes later, the sirens began to howl once more in London. Bombs again began to fall. High explosives. Screamers. Incendiaries. Some of the fires caused the night before were still burning. The technique followed by the Germans was about the same as before. The planes flew high, came in singly or in pairs, and seemed to drop their bombs more or less indiscriminately. Casualties were about the same—286 killed, 1,400 seriously injured.

This was to be the pattern of life in London, night after night, through the beautiful months of September and October, and so into the winter. The planes came on dark nights and on nights of brilliant moonlight, in good weather and bad, on

still dry nights and on nights of wind and rain. Bad weather, plus changing tactics, eventually caused some slackening off but, from September 7 to the moment when these lines are written, the citizens of London have enjoyed only five or six nights free from the menace of bombs.

When the Germans saw that the people of the East End had not panicked and, apparently, were not going to panic, they turned their attention to another part of the capital. The next place they went after was the section known as the City, which is the financial and mercantile district. Some damage was caused here, but the loss of life was not large since, although a million people come into the City during the daytime, only a few thousand spend the night there.

The Germans then went into the West End. Here they could get both property and people and, what is more, they could get people who would influence the policy of the government. Several nights in a row the West End got a thorough pasting. Bombs fell in Park Lane, in Berkeley Square, in Bond Street, Piccadilly and Oxford Street. Exclusive shops were wrecked. Several theaters were destroyed, and one of the largest department stores was burned out.

One of my friends, an American army officer, was worried about this development.

"Now they are getting at the weak spot," he

said. "The workers can take it. I am a bit worried about the shopkeepers."

It appeared that the shopkeepers also could take it, and Goering's bombers moved on. They went after Hampstead, St. Pancras, Marylebone, Paddington, Knightsbridge, Kensington, Chelsea. The suburbs to the south and southwest came in for a special beating. The destruction in Croydon, which had had an attack of its own long before the Blitz started, was terrific. Streatham, Mitcham, Battersea and a score of other communities also came in for attention. Gradually, the tide of destruction spread over the entire city, until there was practically no district which did not show the scars of battle.

There was practically no place that was safe from this rain of death. Bombs went through the streets into the subways, wrecking trains; they sailed through ten-story buildings, to explode in the basement and scatter débris for blocks; they came through the sides of buildings, sometimes exploding within, sometimes passing right through; they fell in the streets, cutting gas and water mains, severing electric cables, tying up traffic; they fell in the stately squares of the West End, and in the cabbage patches of Hackney. They destroyed, with nice impartiality, the cottage of the humblest worker and the great houses of the rich.

The past suffered equally with the present. The

altar at St. Paul's was wrecked; St. James' and a tailoring shop were destroyed by the same bomb. The Middle Temple was torn by splinters; Sir Isaac Newton fell from his pedestal in Leicester Square; the Tower of London was hit, and the auditorium of Drury Lane damaged; the Natural History Museum was set on fire; priceless memorials of a thousand years of history were snuffed out in a few weeks.

Three times the raiders scored hits on Buckingham Palace. It is rumored that Hitler, at the beginning of the war, suggested through a neutral government that the heads of state should be spared. This suggestion reputedly was spurned by the English. Be that as it may, the Germans were very foolish in bombing Buckingham Palace. It gave the fishwives of the East End and the Queen an affinity which could not possibly have been achieved otherwise.

The Germans must have recognized their mistake, for they lost no time in claiming that the bombs which hit the palace were really intended for some oil tanks nearby. There are, of course, no oil tanks within miles of Buckingham Palace. The German claim brought an amusing retort in a letter to the *Times* from a man who signed himself C. Paley Scott.

"Sir," said Mr. Scott, "we all agree that only military objectives should be attacked, but now



that Germany has attacked the oil tanks near Buckingham Palace, is it not time we bombed the submarine base at Berchtesgaden?"

People were killed in their beds, in shelters, on the streets, at work. They died in their cars, in churches, at the cinema. Some died in the midst of doing good and some in the pursuit of crime. Lovers, still entwined, were carried from the parks, and the remains of babies were dug out from under tons of stone, still clasped in the remains of their mothers' arms. Some died of concussion. Some were cut to pieces by splinters. Some had their lungs collapsed by blasts. Thousands were buried alive.

In one suburb of London, a sewer was fractured and 200 people in a shelter below were buried in sewage. An underground river was released from its course, drowning scores in a neighboring subway. Members of a group taking refuge under a large flat building were scalded to death when the steam pipes were shattered. A school sheltering 500 men, women and children blasted out of their homes in a previous raid, was demolished by a direct hit. Doctors in nearby hospitals operated throughout the night.

London carried on. The people kept going. They put out the fires, cleaned up the débris. They patched up the public services, kept the highways open and the trains running. When their buses

were destroyed, they borrowed buses from other cities and got themselves to work. They sand-bagged their monuments and carried precious paintings and stained glass into the country. They buried their radium in wells. Shopkeepers put tar-paper and chicken wire over the fronts of their stores, and hung up dapper signs saying, "Business as usual."

They helped each other. They took care of the injured and succored the homeless. Women tore up their underclothing in the streets for bandages. They fought disease. They buried their dead. They sent their children to the country, and the women fed each other's men.

They slept where they could find places to sleep—under the stairs, in the basement, in halls, under the kitchen table. Those who were fortunate enough to own cars, drove into the country; if they could not find a bed, they slept in their cars or took blankets into the fields.

Above all, the people of London—and of other cities, too—kept cheerful. They kept their chins up and their thumbs up. They fought back. They took it. They fired guns to drown the noise of bombs. When that did not work, they put plugs in their ears. They did not panic. They stayed put. They trusted Churchill and, if this war is ever won by anybody, no one will be entitled to a

greater share of the credit than these front-line fighters in the Battle of Britain.

In evaluating the resistance of the people of Great Britain, we should also bear in mind the fact that the air danger was not the only one with which they had to contend. The great menace, of course, and the one to which the air attacks undoubtedly were a prelude, was the possibility of invasion. There is no doubt that the Nazis intended—and probably still intend—to invade the British Isles. Only the fierce resistance of the R.A.F., and the ability of the British people to withstand punishment, has kept the enemy back thus far.

Britain has been shelled intermittently for several months from the French Coast. The British have installed heavy guns on their side of the Channel, and artillery duels have become a regular feature of life in the Southeast.

Meanwhile, the British have had to maintain their position in the Orient, keep shipping routes open all over the world and fight the Italians in Africa. They have stood fast at Singapore, Gibraltar and Suez. They are now helping the Greeks. If ever a country was at bay, England has been at bay during the past few months; and if ever a country has given an exhibition of how to fight back in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles, that country is Britain.

While hammering London, the Germans did not neglect the rest of the country. They kept nibbling away at the East and Southeast, both by day and by night. South coast towns got an occasional visitation. Alerts were frequently sounded in South Wales. Scotland, upon which fell the first bombs of the war, came in for renewed attention. Northeast England suffered some damage, but I do not believe it was serious. It has always been a mystery to me why the Germans have not done more with the great shipyards on the Tyne.

The industrial heart of England lies in the Midlands. Here are the great manufacturing centers of Sheffield, Leeds and Birmingham; here is the steel industry, backbone of the munitions drive, as well as literally thousands of factories engaged in light manufacturing. The R.A.F. has always paid a great deal of attention to German industry, especially to heavy industry. About the middle of November the Nazis, perhaps copying the R.A.F., possibly despairing of the assault on London, began to launch large scale attacks on the Midlands.

The most spectacular attack was that launched on Coventry on the night of November 14. All the powers of destruction normally brought to bear on Greater London, with its millions of inhabitants were, for the space of a night, concentrated on this city of 225,000 people.

The damage was catastrophic. The heart of the city was converted into a shambles of broken glass, bricks, masonry and smoldering woodwork. The historic cathedral, built in the Fourteenth Century, was destroyed.

Casualties were heavy. The dead were buried in mass funerals.

Damage to military objectives, while small in comparison to that inflicted on the city, was extensive. Twenty factories were damaged, several seriously. Nine or ten others had to close down because of a lack of water, gas and electricity. There has been a great deal of discussion about the degree to which the R.A.F. and the Luftwaffe have interfered with factory production in their respective spheres of operation. It appears that production at Coventry, at least for a few weeks after the raid, was cut by fifty per cent. This was due not so much to damaged factories as to the general chaos created by loss of life, destruction of private property and collapse of the utilities. Gas plants are easy to destroy, and there are a lot of plants, both in Britain and Germany, which cannot run without gas.

The Germans continued to harass Coventry. They also turned their attention to other industrial cities, and went after the port areas with renewed fury. Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield got some bad raids. Liverpool, Bristol

and Southampton were battered. Raids on London, meanwhile, slackened off both in duration and in intensity.

There is another change in strategy in these later raids. The Nazis seem to be concentrating their attacks on smaller areas. German and Italian air experts have long debated the question of throwing everything they could muster at a given time at a single small target. The idea was so to pulverize an individual city or section of a city that nothing could live within this area. It was felt that the psychological effect of such concentrated destruction would be greater than if the same amount of damage were spread over a large area. An airman in Italy explained it to me like this:

"We will take one small square and drop bombs on it until there is nothing left alive—not a cat, not a mouse, not even a cockroach."

The Germans used this technique on Guernica and on Rotterdam. They certainly were toying with it in the attack on Coventry. This new development is more serious than the attacks on London but, like the attacks on London, it is doomed to failure.

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### *Chapter 3*

## OBJECTIVES—MILITARY AND OTHERWISE

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THE first major attack on London appeared to be aimed at a legitimate military objective, the docks. The English for a long time were inclined to credit the Germans with a desire to hit military objectives. If one were passing through Battersea on a bus and came upon a row of houses knocked flat, someone was sure to say, "They were after the power station," and to show, by the tone of his voice, that he was glad they had missed the power station and got some houses instead.

This was true everywhere. Military objectives are so numerous that one probably can be found in every square mile of a great city. The people of London felt for a long time that the Germans were

seriously trying to hit military objectives, and they gloated over the fact that Goering's airmen so rarely found their marks.

This question of military objectives is very, very complicated. Most of the military people with whom I have talked are distressingly vague about just what is a military objective. Docks are supposed to be legitimate targets. So are power stations, railways and factories working on war orders. Railway stations have been bombed by both the Germans and the English. Now, railway stations are invariably filled with civilians. The question is, why is it considered sporting to bomb a railway station full of civilians any more than it is to bomb a house or street full of civilians?

What about trains? A trainload of soldiers obviously would be a military objective. However, troop trains are few and far between. In England, so far as I have been able to observe, troops use the regular trains. Is a train carrying 500 soldiers and 1500 civilians a fit subject for bombing?

The same applies to ships. Practically all ships these days carry some war material and some military men. Anyway, the officers probably belong to the Naval Reserve. The "Empress of Britain," bombed and torpedoed off the coast of Ireland on October 26, carried women and children. She also carried seventy Lockheed bombers. She was



armed; military men were aboard. Were the Germans justified in sinking her?

Factories engaged on war orders apparently are accepted by the military of all countries as fair game. Where are we to draw the line? Practically all factories are, in some way or another, contributing to the war effort. The British, in allocating steel for the manufacture of perambulators, frankly say that they hope to sell the perambulators abroad and thus get money for the purchase of airplanes. Therefore, do not the workers in a perambulator factory, including the young women of the upholstery department, constitute a military objective?

In the country west of London there is a neat little factory which makes spark plugs. The spark plugs, in this instance, go into airplane engines. If we are going to admit the right of an enemy to bomb any factories, I don't see how we can squawk about an attack on this one.

I don't know what the English are doing in Germany. No doubt they have killed civilians, and they probably will kill many more before this war is over. The English maintain that their airmen are given careful training to enable them to locate and hit proper targets. I do know that the R.A.F. boys used to bring their bombs back when they could not find their objectives. The purpose of this book, however, is to tell what the Germans

have done to England. I will have to let someone else tell the story of what the English have done to Germany.

Regardless of what their intentions may be, the Germans are not hitting many military objectives in Britain. An American air expert, who has gone into it thoroughly, tells me that only one to one and one-half per cent of the bombs hit places which could, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered legitimate targets. I have seen hundreds of places hit by bombs in London and in other parts of the country. I have never seen a hit on a first-rate military objective. A city consists mostly of streets, parks and houses. The bombs land mostly on streets, parks and houses.

So far as I know, not a single airdrome has had to be abandoned in England. Every railway station in London is functioning. The railway lines have been hit occasionally, but the services go on. Not a single Thames bridge has been put out of commission. The Battersea and Lots Road power stations continue to rear their great stacks into the sky and to belch smoke heavenward. I don't see how the Germans can miss these stations.

Several buildings housing government departments have been hit but none, so far as I know, has been rendered untenable. Whitehall is a large target. The Houses of Parliament are visible for miles. They remain intact.

Military camps have hardly been touched. I know a heath where there are 38,000 Canadians. The only thing that has landed on this heath is a crippled German plane.

The comparative figures of civilian and military casualties are startling. Of the 2,000 persons killed and 8,000 wounded as a result of air action during the first half of September, only 250 were from the fighting services. The first person to be wounded in Britain was a civilian, a Scottish painter, hit by a machine-gun bullet as he worked on a ladder in the early days of the war. My friend Colonel Ritchie says that the Army boys have a new slogan,

*"Join the Navy and see this world;  
Join the Air Force and see the next;  
Join the Army and avoid the war."*

The British keep accurate records of every bomb dropped in London. They put black dots on transparent sheets. By putting these sheets together and holding them against the light, they can ascertain at a glance which sections of the city have suffered most. One would expect the black dots to cluster about military objectives. This is not the case. They are spread pretty well over the entire metropolitan area. They don't make much of a pattern. The maps look, instead, as though someone had been shaking pepper on them.

The only case that could be made out for the

Germans, on the basis of these maps, is that they go in for regional bombing. Some of the experts believe that the airmen are given a fairly large region for an objective, and not any specific target. The idea is that it would not be possible to hit a specific target anyway, especially at night, whereas if a lot of bombs are dropped in an area where good targets are known to be, there is a possibility of making some hits. Everyone with whom I have talked seems to agree that, with a few conspicuous exceptions, the Germans do not seem to be aiming at specific targets. At least, a plotting of bomb craters does not yield any evidence along this line.

Such military objectives as the Germans do hit are, more often than not, relatively unimportant. Many fire houses have been hit, along with a goodly number of ARP posts, police stations and the like. The Germans cannot possibly make any claims so far as these objectives are concerned, as they are small and scattered and generally located under flat buildings or in some other places where they would not be visible from the air.

The mere fact that the Germans concentrated on London seems to indicate that their objectives were political and human rather than military. There are no military concentrations of any size in London. The port, first section of the city to feel the weight of the German attack, once handled a third of Britain's water-borne traffic, but is now far less

important than Liverpool. Only seven per cent of factories working on war orders are in the London area. The industrial heart of Britain is in the Midlands which, for a long time, were not greatly bothered.

Even in Coventry the damage to people and their homes seems to be much greater than that done to military objectives. The city is surrounded by factories, which go out like the spokes of a wheel. Yet the Germans dumped most of their bombs in the center of the city, in an area perhaps half a mile wide by three-fourths of a mile long. There is an airdrome near Coventry. It has not had a bomb dropped on it since the war started.

The tragedy of this whole question is that the agencies of defense, in their efforts at self-protection, make it practically impossible for an airman to bomb with any accuracy. The most accurate work, I suppose, is done by the dive-bomber. The British have filled the sky over London with balloons to prevent the use of dive-bombers. That keeps the Germans from hitting military objectives. Unfortunately, it does not keep them from hitting people.

The same thing results from the use of anti-aircraft guns. The British boast that their Archie guns keep the Germans up so high that they cannot possibly bomb with any accuracy. They then complain because the Germans bomb from 20,000 feet.

The trouble is, we all want it both ways and, as in other matters, we aren't very apt to get it. The truth of this matter is that everything we do to prevent accurate bombing of military objectives is likely to react to the disadvantage of civilians.

Camouflage is another example. The English are camouflaging airdromes and factories to look like farms. Is that not an invitation to the Germans to bomb farms?

Finally, it turned out that the Germans were coming over on a radio beam and, in this way, attempting to locate positions in the dark. The English very cleverly found a way to distort the beams. No doubt they have saved some important military objectives but, as with other defensive measures, it has been tough on the civilian population.

The code drafted at The Hague in 1923, which has been accepted in theory at least by most countries, says that it is lawful to bombard military depots, factories engaged in the manufacture of armaments, and lines of communication or transport used for military purposes. The rules explicitly forbid the bombardment of these objectives where they cannot be attacked "without indiscriminate bombardment of the civil population." This latter stipulation, if observed, would obviously prevent the bombing of objectives in cities. Unfortunately, practically all military objectives are surrounded by people and, until bombing from the air

becomes much more accurate than it is now, it is not going to be possible to hit these objectives without killing non-combatants.

The Germans have gone for military objectives in Britain; they would be poor strategists if they didn't. They have also gone in for plain terrorization of the civilian population as another form of strategy. I believe this because I saw them do it in Spain and I know they did it in other countries; because the German leaders said they would do it; because the evidence in Britain is unmistakable.

I was in Spain toward the end of the Spanish War. I never saw so many one-legged children. In Alicante a thousand people, practically all women and children, were killed in the market place. I remember one day coming upon the ruins of a small village near Madrid. There was not a house left standing. I wondered what military objective had been there, and made some inquiries. There were only two possible explanations, outside of terrorization, for the destruction of the village. One was the fact that it had the misfortune, like many other towns, to be located at the intersection of two important highways. The other explanation, equally thin, was that the village contained a gasoline station which had been taken over by the military and was being used to fuel Army trucks.

Everyone knows the story of Warsaw and of

Rotterdam. There seems to be no doubt that panic of the civilian population contributed largely to the German success in Poland, the Low Countries and in France, and that the Germans planned it that way.

The Germans have been talking about "total war" for years, and they have left no one in any doubt as to what they have in mind. Hitler and Goering have repeatedly promised to annihilate Britain. Joyce, the Irish ex-Fascist, now plumping for Goebbels, said recently that there would not be "one house left standing in Britain" when the Luftwaffe finished its work. Joyce is better known as Lord Haw-Haw. His pronouncement would seem to indicate that Goebbels, at least, considers houses as military objectives.

That this is precisely the way Herr Goebbels feels about the matter is shown by that bullying film, "Baptism of Fire," put out by the Germans after the fall of France. The purpose of the picture obviously is to scare small neutrals—and big ones, too—by showing what the Germans have done before and what, presumably, they are able to do again. Any protestations that the Germans may make will be thrown in the wastebasket by anyone who has seen this film.

It has long been rumored that the reason for Chamberlain's panic in the Munich crisis was a threat made by Goering to Neville Henderson.



Goering is supposed to have told the British Ambassador at Berlin that he was quite prepared to destroy London if the negotiations fell through. He backed up his threat by having 1,400 Messerschmitts drawn up on the airport at Munich when Mr. Chamberlain came along with his umbrella to talk things over.

There is no doubt that the Germans have gone after civilians in Britain. They cannot possibly attack military objectives in the night-time from three or four miles in the air. They could not find them, in the first place. Secondly, they could not hit them even if they knew where they were. The number of military objectives hit seems to be just about equal to the ratio which they bear to the total area of the city. There can, of course, be no accuracy whatever about the use of incendiaries. These things are just thrown out wholesale. They are bound to hit houses, and, if they should succeed in their ultimate purpose, which is to destroy the city by fire, the slaughter would be horrible.

Further proof that the Germans do not worry too much about military objectives is found in the frequent bombing of small villages and even individual houses. I know a village in Surrey of 100 people. There is not a military objective within miles of it. Yet, one dark night, it was bombed unmercifully. Several houses were destroyed and six people killed.

A hamlet in the Southeast had a similar experience. This town is so small that the gazeteer describes it only as a locality and credits it with a "p.o." but no "pop." On November 21, the Nazis dropped 1,000 incendiaries on this tiny village. Fourteen fell on one house. The people turned out of their cottages—among them an eighteen-year-old girl and a seventy-two-year-old man—and succeeded in disposing of most of the bombs.

Farmhouses have frequently been attacked.

The final evidence is the machine-gunning of civilians. Certainly, no one could claim that air-men machine-gunning people on a beach are aiming at a military objective. This has happened in England. People have also been machine-gunned on the highways, in their gardens and in the fields. I don't have to take anybody's word for this, because I happened to be in a country garden on a Sunday afternoon when a bunch of German bombers dropped in to pay their respects—with bullets.

There are two aspects to this problem, as I see it. One is the difficulty of knowing where to draw the line between military and non-military objectives, the other is the difficulty of hitting military objectives without killing innocent bystanders.

Docks, factories, warehouses, power stations and railway yards are surrounded by people and the houses they live in. The mechanics of society make it necessary for people to live near their work. An

artilleryman or a naval gunner might be able to shell a railway station without devastating the surrounding area. Bombing from the air apparently has not reached such a stage of accuracy. This is especially true at night.

The only way to keep from killing civilians is to stop bombing objectives in cities. To throw 100 bombs at a power station located in a teeming slum, in the hope that one will find its mark, is not confining oneself to military objectives. I hope that Britain is not carrying on this kind of warfare against the German people, and that she will not resort to it in the future. I hope that America, if we should come to war, will make every effort to spare non-combatants. We gave up putting civilians to the sword centuries ago. Let us hope that the airplane does not result in the resurrection of this barbarous practice.

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## *Chapter 4*

# FIGHTING BACK

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THERE are two ways of combating an invading bomber. One is fighting back. The other is taking it. The British are doing both exceedingly well.

Since the collapse of France, Britain has been turned into an armed fortress. The Germans have found this island a hard nut to crack from the air, and they will find it a hard nut to crack in every other way. The morale of the people is excellent. So, too, is the morale of those thousands of expatriates who have gone there to fight for their own countries by fighting for Britain—Czechs, Poles, Frenchmen, Belgians, Dutchmen and Norwegians.

The defense of Britain against air attack lies chiefly in the hands of five agencies. They are the Observer Corps, the searchlight posts, the balloon

barrage, the anti-aircraft batteries, and, of course, the Royal Air Force. All of these agencies have functioned with remarkable bravery and efficiency. They have held the Germans by day and they are breaking their necks trying to find an answer to the menace of the night bombers.

The Observer Corps is the eyes and ears of Britain's defense mechanism. There are about 50,000 men in the organization. They are scattered over every section of the country, in hundreds of posts tucked away in fields, in woods, on the moors, along the coast and even atop high buildings in the cities. No mechanical device has yet been perfected to take the place of the eyes and ears of these men.

The men, who are known as spotters, work visually by day, using field glasses. The height and position of aircraft are determined instantly and accurately with a simple plotting instrument, which is aimed at the machines in the same manner as a gun. A vertical scale shows the height; a needle on a circular chart gives the position.

At night, aircraft are spotted by sound, a system of taking cross checks from several locations giving remarkable accuracy. As soon as a spotter has determined the position, height and direction of flight of an approaching plane, he telephones this information to the nearest center. There are nearly fifty of these centers throughout the country. The

centers in turn notify a group command of the R.A.F., and the ultimate findings of the group commands are passed on to the fighter command.

This might sound a bit complicated; actually, it works very quickly. The movements of invading planes are charted on huge maps at the centers. These maps show at all times how many enemy planes are over the country, where they are, in what direction they are moving, and what the R.A.F. is doing about it. The system works very speedily and sometimes it is only a matter of seconds from the time raiders are spotted to the take-off of a squadron of defending fighters. An invasion at 300 miles an hour requires quick action and, through the Observer Corps, the British get it.

Most of the men of the Corps are volunteers who work on their own time. Their work is unspectacular and, I fear, not properly appreciated by the British public. I know of one post where the spotters include a bank manager, an architect, an organist and a fisherman. Day after day and night after night these men stand in their lonely posts, which frequently consist of a hole in the ground surrounded by sandbags, watching for the enemy. They are the modern counterpart of those who stood by their piles of fagots to signal the coming of the Spanish Armada. They are convinced that, like their forebears of the Sixteenth

Century, they will enable Britain to pull through yet another crisis in the turbulent history of this gigantic little island.

The searchlight defenses apparently are in a state of flux. In the early days of the war, the sky would be a mass of beams whenever the Germans came over. Now searchlight activity seems to be much reduced. I do not believe the searchlight battalions have had much luck in picking up raiders. The clouds seem to be too much for them. I have watched the searchlights in action many times. Only twice have I seen them succeed in picking up an enemy plane.

Searchlight detachments, like those of the Observer Corps, are scattered all over the country. There are about 70,000 men in this branch of the national defense. There are approximately 5,000 searchlights in use.

Units are broken down in posts. There are about ten men in each post. The men use an army sound locator, an apparatus based on the principle of human hearing. It has large movable trumpets for ears, four feet six inches apart instead of the human span of six inches. Two pairs of trumpets are used, one for the horizontal plane and one for the vertical and, when these are on the sound line, it is possible to secure a calculation indicating the approximate position of enemy aircraft. This calculation, if accurate, should enable the men to spot

anything within the range of the 200,000,000-candlepower beams at their command.

That is the theory. In practice, they don't seem to be able to do it very often. It may be the bad weather over England. Perhaps the German planes fly too high for them. In any event, the searchlight boys seem to use a lot of candlepower without doing the Germans much harm.

It may be that the searchlight beams, like the barrage balloons, help to keep the enemy up, and, in that way, justify the money and effort put into them. Moreover, the searchlight crews constitute an effective fighting force. Each detachment is armed with rifles and Lewis guns, and they have succeeded in shooting down several planes. The fact that German airmen frequently attempt to machine-gun the searchlight posts indicates that they must have some value.

The balloon barrage, which was originally looked upon as something of a joke, has proved to be a very valuable means of defense. There are 450 balloon emplacements in London, and there must be at least an equal number in other parts of the country. Most of the large cities have complements of balloons; and wherever there is a vital point such as an aircraft factory or a naval base, they will be seen flying overhead. The total number of balloons in use is in the neighborhood of 4,000 or 5,000.



The balloons are supposed to be able to reach an altitude of 10,000 feet or so in good weather. They usually fly around 4,000 or 5,000 feet. They are non-rigid but carry a tail fin to give them stability. They are attached to cables about half an inch thick. They are raised and lowered by winches mounted on trucks.

The idea of the balloons is to keep the enemy up, where the anti-aircraft gunners can get at him and where he will be prevented from hitting military objectives. Airmen are afraid of these big bags filled with inflammable gas; and no pilot, if he can help it, will go near them. The balloons generally are flown just under the ceiling; this is done to keep from giving away the location of a city and also to keep the Germans from shooting them down. In practice, it has been found that the balloons do make the enemy fly too high for accurate bombing. The balloon barrage seems to be the answer to the kind of low-level and dive-bombing used by the Germans in France.

The balloons are filled with hydrogen, which expands during the ascent. Some of the gas escapes through a valve, and thus constant pressure is obtained. When the gas contracts during the descent, air is admitted between the walls of the double envelope of the balloon. For these reasons, it is necessary to replenish the hydrogen after each flight.

The barrage is completely mobile. At a moment's notice, every balloon in the country can be raised or lowered or set on the move to another site. A demonstration of this mobility was given when, after the first air raid warning in Britain, a complete barrage was set up to guard the approaches to the Firth of Forth, within a few hours.

Each balloon has a crew of twelve men, who are on duty day and night. They have a tough job protecting their unwieldy charges from air attack and the vagaries of the weather. The men are frequently routed out three or four times a night to cope with changing conditions. They are often bombed and occasionally machine-gunned. They stake out their emplacements wherever they can find a suitable site. In London, one crew is stationed in a sports ground, one in a timber yard, another in the garden of a public house. They will be found on golf courses, in parks and in school yards—in fact, in any open space that will give them room to lay out their balloon and to which they can gain access with a truck.

Sometimes in bad weather the balloons become unmanageable. I have seen them diving about the sky in London to the point where they would crash down to the rooftops. Many of them have broken away in storms. The Danes once complained that forty balloons were floating around

Copenhagen, dragging their cables over the city and raising hob with the electrical system.

The crews are made up of all kinds of men—barristers, bookmakers, conjurors, fishmongers, and what not. They have a hard, lonely life, but they carry on with relish and good humor. They develop an attachment for their balloons and give them such names as "Puddin' Pie," "Beefeater," "Tommy Farr" and "Lord Castlerosse." The first of the balloons was known as "Old Bill." The men of the balloon barrage mourned when he was brought down in late October. He was worn by weather, ripped by shell splinters and punctured by German bullets. He died at Dover with 240 patches on his sides, shot down by a Nazi. The *Daily Express* heralded his demise with the affectionate announcement: "Old Bill, ye original gas-bagge, goes down."

The balloon barrage is also being used at sea. It has been found to be an effective means of preventing the Germans from dive-bombing convoys. The bags have also been attached to barges along the convoy route, to hamper German airmen in their efforts to sow magnetic mines.

All of the balloons, both ashore and afloat, are most effective at night. Pilots have learned to fear the great bags and the taut cables which they support. Several bombers have been brought down by the cables. No one knows how high the bal-

loons are flying on a given night. Enemy pilots are apt to allow plenty of margin for error.

The balloon barrage idea is attributed to Frederick Lindemann, an Oxford professor and friend of Churchill's. The Germans apparently dislike them, for they spend a lot of time trying to shoot the balloons down.

The most welcome sound in London these days is the sound of the anti-aircraft barrage. There is something comforting about the sound of these guns, especially at night. The barrage really got going on the night of September 11, the fifth night of the Blitzkrieg. It threw a scare into the attackers who, up to that time, had had everything their own way. More important, it gave confidence to the beleaguered populace and drowned out the sound of falling bombs. The British frankly admit that one of the greatest benefits of the barrage was the fact that it absorbed the bomb explosions at a time when the people were not yet conditioned to the nightly ordeal and there was a very real danger of panic.

Anti-aircraft defenses have always been a moot question in Britain. It was rumored at the time of the Munich crisis, that the British only had about 100 Archie guns and that, of these, only fifty were ready to shoot. I have heard that there were only seven in London, whereas the city should have had

400. The subject has remained a bit obscure to the present moment.

I have been unable to get any accurate information on the number of such guns in Britain. The chances are that the British have about 1,000 A.A. guns of all types in the London area, and another 1,000 or 2,000 scattered around the country. These figures are a very rough guess, for which I must assume full responsibility.

The mainstay of anti-aircraft defense is the 3.7 inch gun and its big brother, the 4.5. I understand the British are producing a large-calibre machine-gun capable of firing 7,000 rounds in thirty minutes with the use of two barrels. They are also using a rapid-fire gun of Swedish invention, the Bofors, which is said to be very useful. I have not seen any of the pom-pom guns, used on ships, around London, but I heard one in the country a while back. These guns have eight barrels, and can toss out two-pound shells with considerable rapidity and remarkable accuracy. Because it looks faintly like a pipe organ, and because it fits in with a common English conception of American life, this gun is known to the trade as the "Chicago Piano."

The A.A. gun is one of the most highly technical instruments used in modern warfare. To hit an airplane, it is obviously necessary to determine not only the height at which it is flying but the speed

and line of flight. This information is secured by a galaxy of instruments with which each A.A. or Archie gun is equipped. The most useful and complicated of the instruments is the predictor, which not only calculates the bearing and elevation for the gun but gives the right fuse-setting for the shells and makes allowances for wind, curve of trajectory, and even variations in barometric pressure in the upper air.

The shells are made of brittle metal and are timed to explode in the vicinity of the target. It is only once in a blue moon that a gunner succeeds in making a direct hit on an enemy plane, but if he throws up enough metal he may get something as each shell, in bursting, throws splinters for a radius of two or three hundred yards.

The difficulty, of course, is that one must work not only with a movable target, but one that can move in two planes. This means that it is necessary to fire hundreds, even thousands, of shells for each plane brought down. It took 5,000 or 6,000 shells to bring down a plane in the World War. It is taking even more than that in Britain. This is probably due to the greater speed of the planes and the greater heights at which they fly.

The principal advantage of "ack-ack," of course, is that, like the balloon barrage, it keeps planes up so that they cannot bomb accurately. It also points the way for fighter pilots who are able to locate the

enemy from the puffs given off by exploding shells. Some planes undoubtedly are forced to turn back. The British claimed, at one time, that forty-five per cent of all raiders approaching London were forced to turn back by A.A. fire.

I believe this figure is far too high, but there is no doubt that many planes have been prevented from coming into the central city as a result of the barrage. The psychological effect of the gunfire is also useful. Even if it does not drive off the enemy, it stirs them up, messes up the formations if they come over in force, unnerves them. With shells bursting around him, a pilot would be more than human if he weren't tempted to unload and scoot for home.

The British claim that roughly a seventh of all Nazi raiders destroyed over England have been brought down by anti-aircraft guns. Three hundred and fifty bombers and fighters were destroyed in this way during a period of thirteen weeks. Fast, high-flying Messerschmitts have been shot down, as well as the slower and lower-flying Heinkels and Dorniers. Dover gunners brought down a Messerschmitt-109 fighter from five miles in the air. In addition to known casualties, the A.A. men also believe that they damage many planes, and that some of these do not manage to get home. Examination of the wreckage of German aircraft, and the bodies of German airmen washed ashore

in the Channel, often proves that the guns must be credited with the victory.

Attempts at individual hits were more or less abandoned during the early days of the Blitzkrieg. The defense on the night of September 11, and for many nights thereafter, took refuge in a barrage. The gunners gave up trying to aim. They just focussed on a particular square of sky and let fly with everything they had. They seemed to have plenty. The racket was probably the noisiest ever heard by a civilian population. Splinters fell like hail. The gunners didn't get many Germans, but they scared some of them off and it was noticed that succeeding raiders were flying 6,000 feet higher. It may have been only a coincidence, or it may have been due to the weather, but the raids were less severe on succeeding nights. The people of London, however, are inclined to give the credit to the "ack-ack" boys. Certainly, it is a great help to hear them popping away through the night.

In addition to the stationary guns, they also have some mounted on trucks. These units are moved around the city at will. This enables the defenders to cover blind spots in the network of stationary guns. It also brings the gunfire closer to the people. I had one under my window in a West End square throughout a long night. The noise was so terrific that no one was able to sleep, but we didn't



mind that. Somehow we felt that as long as that gun was in action, we were safe from bombs.

An interesting development of the barrage has been the use of naval vessels. Military people remarked, on the night of September 11, that there was a new note in the firing. They were right. Several ships had come up the Thames to aid the hard-pressed defenders. One of the vessels was the destroyer "Cossack," which rescued British prisoners from the German ship "Altmark," and later took part in the historic engagement at Narvik. These vessels apparently came up the river each night and then retired before dawn. In view of the perennial planes-versus-ships controversy, it is significant that seapower was thrown into the scales in the Battle of London.

Naval guns also have been brought ashore and mounted in some of the larger parks. They are principally of 4.9 and 6-inch calibre. When they let go, one does not have to use his imagination to know that London really is in the front line of the Second World War.

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## *Chapter 5*

# “NEVER WAS SO MUCH OWED BY SO MANY TO SO FEW”

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THE Blitzkrieg on London began on September 7. The Blitzkrieg, so far as the Royal Air Force is concerned, started a month earlier, on August 8.

On August 8 began the greatest air offensive ever known. It continued more or less without interruption until September 15, when the Germans took the greatest air beating ever known. After September 15, the attacks tapered off and the Germans, since then, have devoted themselves mainly to night raids.

The British victories are the more remarkable when it is remembered that the R.A.F. was fighting against great odds. Nobody outside of Ger-

many—and few in Germany—know the strength of the Luftwaffe at the beginning of the war. The Nazis certainly had several times as many planes as the British. They could afford to throw them around wholesale; and that is just what they did in the attack on Britain.

The records of the R.A.F. abound with accounts of battles waged against seemingly overwhelming odds. Instances of one British pilot wading into eight or ten of the enemy are common; sometimes the figure would be twenty or thirty and I know of one fight in which a boy in a Spitfire attacked seventy-five Messerschmitts! Such attacks didn't always win, of course, and some of the finest lads in the world have had to pay with their lives for Britain's failure to re-arm.

The victory of September 15 marked a definite turning point in the war. Between 300 and 400 German bombers attempted a daylight attack on London. They were met on the coast by Spitfires and Hurricanes. Many were destroyed and others driven back across the Channel. Those which flew inland were pounced upon by other defense squadrons, and the few which reached the Thames were there engaged again. Two planes were shot down in Central London. The rest of them fell in fields and commons and villages throughout the east and southeast sections of the country.

The British could not keep up with the mount-

ing figures of enemy losses. Every time they tried to announce a total, they were forced to revise it by reports of the discovery of new hulks. Late the next day, it was announced that the final figures were 185 German planes down.

R.A.F. losses, meanwhile, were reported as twenty-five fighters—a loss ratio of seven to one over the enemy in number of machines, of twenty to one in airmen, and of perhaps thirty-five to one in value of material destroyed.

The announcement of this victory did much to encourage the people of London and to fortify them in their battle with the night raiders.

Early in November, Mussolini announced that the Fuehrer had given him permission to participate in the raids on Britain. A few bombers, protected by German fighters, came over. The Italian radio made quite a to-do over this historic occasion. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was induced to retaliate with the only sarcasm I have ever heard emanate from this august agency. Said the evening announcer in his calm, casual way:

“The Germans are praising the Italians and the Italians are praising themselves.”

Unfortunately for the Italian case, they claimed to have raided London, whereas the principal raid for that day was made on a coastal town.

The Germans lost so many fighters protecting

the Italians they made them bring their own fighters the next time they came over. That was on Armistice Day, when eighteen Italian bombers, escorted by fifty or sixty fighters, attempted to celebrate by bombing a British convoy off the Thames Estuary. Two Hurricane squadrons sailed into the Italians and reputedly shot down thirteen of them without loss to themselves. The planes were old and slow and some of them were made of wood. Where, oh where, is that big air force which Mussolini has been brandishing over the capitals of Europe for seven years?

There has always been a great deal of discussion about the losses reported by the British. I have talked to American air attachés about this many times, also to most of the American correspondents in London. Every person with whom I have talked thus far is inclined to accept the British figures as accurate. People whose business it is to investigate these figures tell me that the reports of German losses are conservative, if anything. German planes are always found where the British say they will be found. The British may minimize their own losses; there is no way that the press and foreign military attachés could check on that. I am convinced, however, that the figures given out for German losses are absolutely on the level and that, if there is any error, it is on the conservative side.

There is another reason why I am inclined to accept the British figures. It is this. In all the air battles which I have seen—and I have seen some good ones—the Germans have always been on the defensive. Either they have been circling around to protect each other's tails or they have been in full flight. I have never seen a Messerschmitt chasing a Spitfire.

The results of the fight to date are even more favorable to the R.A.F. than the reports of relative losses indicate. The British used to engage the enemy over the Channel. When the going got tough, they retired inland. This helped them in several ways. Not the least important was the fact that British pilots who had to bail out were saved, whereas German pilots were lost. This was an important consideration.

In the big battle of September 15, for example, when the Germans lost 185 planes, they also lost several hundred experienced airmen. The English lost twenty-five planes, but twelve of the pilots were saved. The result of this situation is that, whereas the English have destroyed enemy planes in the ratio of three or four to one, they have been able to kill and capture enemy pilots at the rate of ten or twelve to one.

There is also the matter of salvage. The British have been able to save a lot of planes, both enemy and R.A.F., shot down over their country. Each

German shot down is a dead loss to the Luftwaffe. The English, meanwhile, have been saving one in three of their own machines. The wreckage of German planes is carefully collected and assembled in huge "boneyards" in various parts of the country. One of these mortuaries, located in Surrey, contains twenty acres of wreckage.

The Germans have tried many tactics in their efforts to conquer the R.A.F. First, they attempted to beat down the defense by sheer force of numbers. That failed. They then sent over individual bombers to pull "hit and run" raids on vital objectives. That failed. The third scheme was to send over occasional strong forces to bomb airfields and communications. That also failed.

The Germans next tried sending a small number of bombers with increasingly powerful fighter escorts. This cut down the ratio of losses considerably. The British could knock down bombers at the rate of three or four to one, but on fighters they were only able to do about 1.3 to one. On the other hand, if the Germans have to send four or five fighters to each bomber, they aren't able to do much damage.

The Germans came in at all levels. Sometimes they would come in off the sea at a height of fifty feet and go hedge-hopping inland. I have seen them come across the fields so low that they had to zoom to clear a house. They apparently did this to

scare the people, and also to prevent British fighters from getting under them. Mostly, however, the Germans have come in at great heights. They seem to prefer 15,000 or 20,000 feet, at which height, in the English atmosphere, they are ordinarily invisible. They have been found as high as 35,000 feet.

The Germans came in in various ways and from all directions. In the first week of the Blitzkrieg, they had a "bus route" up the Thames. When the anti-aircraft fire got too hot for them there, they came in elsewhere. They were always trying to invent a new maneuver. One day they would come in en masse and then split up as they approached London; the next day they might come in in scattered formations and converge on the capital. It is not the fault of the German pilots that they failed to take England. They certainly tried hard enough.

Twenty Messerschmitt pilots, flying high over Surrey, ran into a squadron of Hurricanes. The Germans immediately split into two groups and began to make dummy attacks on each other. Two of them even broke off and dove down as though intending to join the Hurricanes. My information does not disclose what happened after that but, from the fact that the Air Ministry maintains a discreet silence about it, I gather that the German stratagem worked.



The Nazis frequently came over in two groups. One group would engage British fighters, say at 15,000 feet. At the right moment, the other group would come roaring down, say from 25,000 feet, and attempt to get the British in the rear. Then the dodge would be varied by having the second group wait below the decoy formation. These and all other tactics were met by the R.A.F. and, in due course, mastered.

The Nazis seemed always to be looking for a weak spot, and sought to exploit to the fullest the advantage of the offensive. Therefore, they would strike one time here, another time there and then, to press their advantage still further, the third time they might strike at many points simultaneously. They also did everything possible to increase the nuisance value of their raids. They would come during rush hours, thus delaying people on their way to work in the morning and on their way home in the evening. For a while, they came over during the lunch hour. Long before the Blitzkrieg on London began, they were coming over the outlying districts—the so-called dormitory suburbs—in order to keep people awake. Finally, planes on their way inland, at least at night, were likely to fly over London—both going and coming—to add to the noise and confusion and thus wear down the nerves of the people.

The Germans originally used heavy bombers,

protected by fighters. For some reason—perhaps because of heavy casualties, perhaps because of weather—these have been largely withdrawn. The Germans are now using fighter-bombers. Most of them are Messerschmitts fitted with emergency racks for carrying two 500-pound bombs. They are, of course, much less vulnerable than the heavy bombers, but they are also much less effective.

In Holland and France, dive-bombing proved extremely effective. Against objectives protected by the R.A.F., however, it proved too costly for general employment.

The Germans finally turned to the only kind of attack left to them, the method with which the British began the war—the night raid. They have done very well in the night-time. I don't believe they are going to win the war this way, but there is no point in kidding ourselves that they have not done an awful lot of damage. Between 200 and 300 bombers are coming over England nightly. They are killing people and destroying property and, as long as they can keep that up, they are injuring the war-making capacity of their enemy.

The Germans probably have around 1,000 bombers. The English may have half that number. The number of planes coming over Britain remains more or less constant. This has led some of the experts to believe that Goering is using the maximum force at his disposal. If, they say, the

Germans have the mass of bombers they are supposed to have, why do they not attack London and the Midlands simultaneously instead of on different nights? I will let the experts answer that one.

There is one question I shall attempt to answer. That concerns the quality of German material and the ability of German airmen. These rumors about jerry-built planes and inexperienced pilots are hooey. All the German planes I have seen seem to be very well built. The pilots are young but, I understand, no younger on the average than the R.A.F. boys. The truth of the matter seems to be that the German planes are good but that the British planes are just a little better. The same is probably true of the pilots.

If the Germans are sending over inexperienced pilots, as is sometimes claimed, it should be an occasion for alarm and not for rejoicing. Goering has been building his air force for the past seven years. If he sends over pilots with ten hours' flying time, it is not because he hasn't any with more experience; it may mean that he is saving them for bigger and better things. If I were the English, I should like to see a lot of 1,000-hour boys coming over.

The exploits of the R.A.F. have begun to assume legendary proportions in England. No matter where you go you are bound to run into

someone with a new story about the latest high-jinks of these irrepressible young men.

"Did you hear about the lad who ran out of ammunition?" somebody will ask. "Well, he chased an ME-110 half way across Kent, signaling to him to come down. When the Jerry kept on going, our lad came alongside and, by smacking the other fellow with his wing, finally knocked his tail off."

More than once British pilots, and those who are flying for Britain, have brought down enemy planes by deliberately crashing into them. Czech and Polish pilots are especially reckless in battle. They fight with a cold fury that knows neither reason nor restraint. An English airman told me that they were a bit worried over the way some of their allies threw planes around. In order to keep going, the English have to bring down enemy machines at the rate of two or three to one. A Polish boy, flying head-on into a Messerschmitt, is demonstrating his hatred of the Germans, and all that, but he is also sacrificing material at a rate which the R.A.F. can not stand. These boys are so eager that it is not safe to trust them with a plane. The minute they get off the ground they are likely to head for Germany, whether they have anything to fight with or not.

Fifty Polish pilots were sent to an airdrome west of London to pick up some planes which had

been repaired. As they were getting in, one of them noticed that something was missing.

"Where's the ammunition?" he demanded.

It turned out there wasn't any ammunition; the Poles were only going to ferry the planes to other 'dromes.

"Nothing doing," they declared. "No ammunition, no fly."

The English pleaded, as much as an Englishman ever will plead, but it was no use. Only nine of the pilots could be induced to take off. The other forty-one, so far as I know, are still waiting for ammunition.

The Germans, of course, are no slouches in the air. Their raids on England haven't all been hit-and-run affairs, and the archives of the Luftwaffe no doubt could yield many a tale of heroism and sacrifice. There is a story going the rounds about two English flyers who lost a companion near Weybridge. It was just getting dark. They were relieved when, in a moment, the other plane came up to rejoin the formation. They didn't discover until they were preparing to land that their companion was a German. He got in a couple of good bursts, planted some bombs on the airport and succeeded in making off—or so 'tis said.

People who think the English are slow should take a look at the R.A.F. boys. They make a lark out of their deadly business, yet in action they fight

with a cold precision that is absolutely devastating. The boys are always forgetting themselves and disobeying orders by chasing an enemy plane across the Channel. Several of them have wound up in France or Germany. I suppose, at 400 miles an hour, it is not at all difficult to get into the wrong country.

The Government tries to keep the exploits of British airmen anonymous. It is only under exceptional circumstances, usually in connection with the award of a medal, that the boys get their names in the paper. One story will show the sort of thing they are doing.

On November 14, Flight-Lieutenant James Brindley Nicolson was awarded the first Victoria Cross to be won by a fighter pilot in this war. The story of the exploit which won Nicolson the V.C. is one which it hurts to hear.

It seems that Nicolson was on patrol over Southampton in a Hurricane, and decided to chase a Junkers. Instead, he found himself in front of a Messerschmitt-110 which poured four cannon shells into his plane. What happened after that is described in the official account as follows:

"One shell tore through the hood and sent splinters into his left eye. The second shell struck his spare petrol tank, which exploded and set the machine on fire.

"The third shell crashed into the cockpit and

tore away his trouser leg. The fourth hit his left foot and wounded his heel.

"As Flight-Lieutenant Nicolson turned to avoid further shots into his burning plane he suddenly found the Messerschmitt had overtaken him and was right on his gun sight. His dashboard was shattered and was, in his own words, 'dripping like treacle' with the heat. The Messerschmitt was 200 yards in front.

"As Flight-Lieutenant Nicolson pressed the gun button he could see his right thumb blistering in the heat. He could also see his left hand, which was holding the throttle open, blistering in the flames.

"The Messerschmitt zig-zagged this way and that, trying to avoid the hail of fire from the blazing Hurricane. By this time the heat was so great that Nicolson had put his feet on the seat beneath his parachute.

"He continued the fight for several minutes until the Messerschmitt disappeared in a steep dive. Eyewitnesses later reported they had seen it crash a few miles out to sea.

"On losing sight of the enemy Nicolson attempted to jump out, but struck his head on the hood above him. He immediately threw back the hood and tried to jump again.

"Then he realized he had not undone the strap holding him in the cockpit. One of these straps

broke. He undid the other, and then at last succeeded in jumping.

"He dived head first and after several somersaults in the air he pulled the rip-cord with considerable difficulty. It took him something like twenty minutes to reach the ground.

"A Messerschmitt came screaming past, and as he floated down he pretended he was dead. When the Messerschmitt had gone he noticed for the first time that his left heel had been struck.

"Blood was oozing out of the lace-holes of his boots. He tried to see what other injuries he had received, and found that he was able to move all his limbs.

"At one moment as he was coming down he thought he would hit a high tension cable, but managed to maneuver in the sky so that he missed it. Reaching the ground he saw a cyclist and managed to land in a field near to him."

While he was landing, with seventy pieces of metal in him, Nicolson was shot once more—this time by a Home Guard! The first thing he did when they got him to a hospital was send a wire to his wife, who was then expecting a baby. The wire said:

"Shot down darling. Very slightly hurt. Particulars will follow. All my love—Nick."

The R.A.F. boys are the heroes of the hour in England. They should be. If it had not been for



them, the war might well have been over by now. Once in command of the skies, the Luftwaffe could have smashed Britain to pieces; once in command of the skies, the Germans could have launched an invasion. Churchill expressed the feelings of the nation—indeed, of a good share of the world—when, on August 20, 1940, he told the House of Commons:

“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

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## *Chapter 6*

# BEATING THE NIGHT BOMBER

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UNFORTUNATELY for Britain, the R.A.F. has not been able to duplicate its daylight successes with regard to the night bomber. Night defense is the need of the hour. The best brains in Britain are struggling with the problem but they do not seem to have made much progress. The Germans send over 200 or 300 planes a night. The defenders—if they are lucky—get two or three. There was considerable jubilation one night when five of the attackers were brought down. Military authorities quickly pointed out that these planes probably weren't more than 2.5 per cent of those which came over.

The British are up against it in this matter of night bombing. The people have taken it for a

long time and can continue to take it for a long time to come. They'll never quit. You can't win a war by "taking it," however, and eventually the British have got to find a way to stop this nightly battering.

The country is filled with rumors about new devices supposedly being evolved by the air ministry to beat the night bomber. Air Marshal Joubert said that he had received some "encouraging news" When the papers stressed the danger of raising false hopes, the Marshal hurriedly added, "The problem of putting an end to these night raids is far from being solved."

Joubert's second statement is, in my opinion, the more accurate one.

The situation seems to be that the British have a method but that it hasn't yet been put into practice. One hears vague references to the answer having been found; that the problem is now "one of production." The problem of the night bomber, of course, is a problem of location. The bulk of the British effort presumably is being directed toward the perfection of some device for locating planes in the dark. It is freely bruited about London that scientists are working on a machine which will reveal the infra-red rays of the enemy's exhaust. Another apparatus under consideration is said to be sensitive to the spark.

The exhaust gadget sounds promising. In addi-

tion to being good in the dark, it could also be used in fog. The British are very busy on something and eventually should be able to find a partial answer, at least, to the menace of the night raider.

Men are being trained for night work, and some night fighters have already been placed in operation. They get an occasional Jerry. The big need is for swift development of the method of location that has been devised, whatever it is. If the British can beat the night bomber, they will be well on the way to air supremacy and to the winning of the war.

The horror of the night raids has led to an avalanche of suggestions for stopping the Nazi raiders. At one time suggestions were pouring into the air ministry and the ministry of aircraft production at the rate of 3,000 a week. They come from people all over Britain, from the Dominions and from other countries as well. Every suggestion is scrutinized carefully to see whether it contains an idea, or the germ of an idea, which might help to win the war. The British have not forgotten that the tank, with which the Germans have conquered the Continent, was originally a British invention, and that it lay in a pigeonhole in the War Office for years before finally being adopted. The Government is not taking any chances with ideas for beating the night bomber. Many of the ideas have a

grain of practicality; others are hopelessly impractical; some are just pathetic.

One of the suggestions made, incidentally by a military man, is that Britain abolish the black-out. The idea behind this suggestion is:

"The Germans know where London is, anyway. Why not light up and carry on? It would help morale. We would do more business, increase production, cut down accidents, reduce crime, speed up traffic."

It is contended that enemy pilots could not see specific objectives in a brilliantly-illuminated city, any more than they can in a darkened city. Speeding up traffic would be a great help to ambulance drivers and firefighters. It does seem a bit illogical to drive through dark streets to fight a fire.

An American friend has a variation of the foregoing idea. He suggests that the authorities wait until they get a fleet of German bombers over the city, and then suddenly turn on all the lights. British fighters, waiting high overhead, could then swoop down and polish off the Jerries.

Balloons figure prominently in night-raider suggestions. Many people wonder why, instead of using tethered balloons, it would not be possible to have small dirigibles cruising about the sky. Their effectiveness could be increased by having them dangle cables. The ceiling of an anchored balloon is limited by the weight of the cable.

Would it not be possible to get greater altitude by pyramiding the balloons—that is, by flying balloons from each other, starting with a large balloon and ending up with a small one? One inventor suggests that men with machine-guns might be installed atop the balloons; another thinks millions of toy balloons, each filled with a spoonful of acid, could be released over the city at night. The Germans would run into the toy balloons, explode them and be eaten up by the acid.

Camouflage is a favorite topic of discussion. It is rumored that smoke screens have been tried out at several places. It didn't work in London but, reportedly, has been very successful over a certain low-lying city in the Midlands. I venture to suggest that the eight or ten million fireplaces of Greater London could give forth a lot of smoke, gas, or what have you, if the government were to supply householders with the proper ingredients.

One camouflage enthusiast suggests that a gigantic canvas, painted to look like the countryside, be suspended over London. A fellow enthusiast thought he was too modest. Why not, asked the second man, reproduce the British Isles and fly the reproduction somewhere else, as a decoy? A business man suggested building a roof over Oxford Street so that the stores would not have to worry about the black-out.

There is somewhere in England, an optimist

who wants to freeze the clouds and mount anti-aircraft guns upon them. Other optimists suggest parachutes with motors, so that fliers who bail out can get back to their bases; illuminated bombs, to enable pilots to gauge the accuracy of their aim; airplanes with knife-edged wings for cutting enemy parachutists out of their harness; trucks for catching parachutists (they are to be driven under the parachutist, who falls into a net and is then driven away to the internment camp); magnetic aerial mines; a helicopter, worked by a perpetual motion engine, for carrying searchlights, guns and men to colossal heights.

A man came to the air ministry one day with a great and mysterious invention. He called it a death ray. It turned out to be a short circuit. Hundreds of inventors have methods for interfering with the enemy's electrical system, for plugging up his carburetor. Why not drop lampblack, to cover up his windshield, asks one? How about going over Germany at night and dropping pointed steel rods on the enemy's airdromes? The enemy would get all tangled up in the rods, the planes would be wrecked, the war would be over.

Beachcomber, a London columnist, crowns the efforts of all amateur inventors to find methods of beating the Germans. He suggests scattering a substance which he dubs "brace-rot" over Germany. Eventually the Heinies would be without suspend-

ers. This, Beachcomber says, will ruin German production, as nobody can work while his pants are falling down.

Somewhere among all these ideas—good, bad and goofy—may lie the answer to the night bomber.

Fortunately for Britain, the difficulty of repelling night bombers cuts both ways. The British undertook night raids against Germany at the very beginning of the war, and they have been carrying them on ever since. The R.A.F. men, of course, are at a great disadvantage in carrying on this kind of warfare against Germany. In the first place, they have fewer bombers. In the second place, they have to travel four or five times as far to reach vital objectives. Nevertheless, the British have persevered in their attacks and claim to be inflicting greater damage than they have thus far suffered.

The English maintain that they confine themselves to military objectives and that they are working according to a carefully prepared plan. Apparently this plan was worked out long before the war began. The objectives to be bombed are decided upon through the cooperation of several government departments. Some objectives are attacked for military reasons; others are attacked for economic reasons; few, the British say, are



attacked for political reasons. Since the British believe that the Germans are going to be whipped economically, when they are whipped, they are inclined to follow suggestions from the Ministry of Economic Warfare in their selection of objectives.

The R.A.F. bombers concentrate—at least, they are said to concentrate—on munitions works, power stations, airdromes, aircraft factories, oil plants, railways and docks. Attacks have been made on more than 200 major objectives within these categories. The British consider factories especially important. They believe they have reduced production in Germany by twenty per cent. The British communiques bristle with nightly sallies on Mannheim, Dusseldorf and the ubiquitous marshalling yards at Hamm. If Hamm receives all the attention it is said to receive, it should be only a hole by this time. The same with the so-called invasion ports.

Both the English and the Germans have made great use of fire. British papers boasted about the dropping of 20,000 incendiaries on Hamburg in a single night. The British also devised a new trick in the fire war—the self-igniting leaf—which seems to have been particularly effective against crops and forests.

Side by side with the R.A.F., in both defense and offense, goes the Fleet Air Arm. This, as the

name implies, is the air branch of the navy. The achievements of the Fleet Air Arm, while less spectacular than those of the R.A.F., have contributed mightily to the British war effort, especially in the maintenance of Empire communications.

It has been an irony of the war in the Mediterranean that, whereas the Italians were always boasting about what their air force was going to do to the British navy, in practice the British planes seem to be raising the devil with the Italian navy. The most spectacular success was the attack at Taranto, in which, according to all reports, about half of Mussolini's capital ships were put out of action.

The great loss of life and great destruction caused by German bombs in England has naturally resulted in a demand for reprisal raids on the civilian population. The military authorities have, publicly at least, resisted this demand. They explain that they need their bombs for oil refineries and cannot afford to waste them on people.

Nevertheless, the R.A.F. boys don't bring their bombs back any more. In the early months of the war they were ordered to do this. They did it. The first thing Sir Charles Portal, new Chief of Air Staff, did, when he took over, was to announce that any flier who brought bombs back from Germany would be courtmartialed.

Sir Charles' order came just in time, as the men were getting very sick of lugging a ton of bombs back from Germany and then trying to make a landing with them on a wet field in the dark.

I don't know anything about the casualties in Germany, but I imagine they must be considerable. It is significant that the first American to be killed in the air warfare between the two countries was a seven-year-old boy killed by a British bomb in Stuttgart. If the English are doing to Germany what I know the Germans are doing to England, I sincerely hope that someone in Germany will write a counterpart of this book.

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## *Chapter 7*

# TAKING IT

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THERE are many ways of "taking it." All require guts. I take my hat off to the people of Britain.

The defense deficiencies have ceased to be an academic matter in England; they are now being paid for with flesh and blood and property. The people have endured the horrors of air bombardment with remarkable fortitude and calm.

The British began their preparations for civil defense back in 1938, about the time of the Munich crisis. In their methodical, unspectacular way, they have built up a good organization. During the first few months of the war, when people began to think that Hitler was stymied, there was much grumbling about the thousands of defense workers who had nothing to do but sit around and twid-

dle their thumbs. The government resisted pressure for a whittling down of the services. It was a good thing. The men and women of the fire, medical and other branches fully proved themselves on the night of September 7 and during the succeeding weeks. Just as the R.A.F. saved England in the air, the civil defense workers undoubtedly saved England on the ground.

There are several steps that may be taken to minimize the hazards of air raids. The principal ones are:

- (1) Dispersal
- (2) Black-out
- (3) Camouflage
- (4) Air raid warnings
- (5) Shelters

The British Government has been trying to evacuate people from danger areas since the beginning of the war. Several hundred thousand people—principally mothers and children, and aged, infirm and blind persons—were induced to leave during the first month or two. When nothing happened, however, they began to drift back so that, when the Blitzkrieg burst, the population of London was almost back to normal.

The people are now dispersing again. A million and a half evacuees from London and other large cities are billeted in reception areas throughout

the country. More than 600,000 children have left London, but 135,000 are still living in the city—under fire. The government has under consideration a plan for the compulsory evacuation of remaining children and, if the bombing should get much worse, probably will put it into effect.

The evacuees had a miserable time of it at first. They didn't like the country, and the country apparently didn't like them. Some of the children were dirty; some were lousy; some had not been house-trained. Children from the East End, who had been raised in a hard school, came prepared to fight everyone. Life to them was a constant battle. They would throw stones at the village cop and, if they got it in for a farmer, might kill his dog. The mothers were lonely. They missed the cinema and they were angry because they couldn't get fish and chips. They hated to be alone. They were afraid of the wind and the trees and the animals.

The evacuees, on the other hand, were sometimes forced to accept primitive accommodations. I had a neighbor in Surrey, a wealthy old nobleman, who refused to take any evacuees. When the billeting officer brought a batch of kids around and shoved them through the front door, the old man made them sleep in a scullery and refused to let them play on the grass.

These conditions happily are being remedied and, although nobody is particularly fond of the

arrangement, both the evacuees and their hosts seem to be reconciled to it as one of the necessities of the war.

The dispersal of industries, as well as people, is under consideration by the British government. There are many industries which could be taken out of the large cities and established in the country. If the war goes on for another year or two—which I think will be the case—small factories are very likely to spring up all over England.

The black-out in England, following the declaration of war, was immediate and drastic. For many months the people have been living in darkness. The police are very strict. Windows must be blacked out so that not a crack of light shows. Flashlights must be masked with paper. Smoking is permitted on the streets, but you are not allowed to strike matches.

The Government has experimented with a variety of lights for automobiles. Motorists are now allowed one hooded light, which casts a dim glow about twenty feet ahead of the car. Side lights and tail lights must be painted over except for an aperture the size of a halfpenny. The first time I drove, after the declaration of war, I wrapped a burlap bag around each light on my car, and even then got stopped by the police. Street lights have been shaded and reduced to a bulb about the size of those used in automobiles. Traffic lights have been

painted over except for small crosses in the middle.

Black-out precautions finally became so stringent that one of the papers ran a cartoon in which an ARP warden tells a fireman, at a great blaze, to "put out that cigarette." A cigarette, incidentally, has been held by the courts to be a fire. One Reginald Rawlins was fined \$10 for breaking the Protected Places By-Laws 1939 by "lighting a fire in the open without permission."

There was no Guy Fawkes Day celebration this year. The English children shoot off fireworks on November 5 to celebrate the frustration, in 1605, during the reign of James I, of a plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament. The only kind of fireworks allowed this year were of the sort that could be used in the drawingroom. I suppose that would mean sparklers.

On September 8, at a time when London was experiencing its worst fire since 1666, the Ministry of Home Security warned citizens to be careful with their flashlights, as they might be visible to the enemy. These English; you can't beat them.

Camouflage is being used quite extensively in England. I noticed in Bristol, in the course of a recent visit, a parking lot that had been covered over with chicken wire. The chicken wire in turn was embellished with bits of green rag, to make it look like grass. Most of the factories have been well daubed with brown and green paint. They



look rather hideous from the ground, but it seems that, so far as airmen are concerned, they may look like anything except a factory.

Airports should be difficult to camouflage, yet I have been told by English airmen that their artists achieve remarkable effects—so remarkable that the boys occasionally have difficulty in finding their own fields.

The air raid warning used in England is a siren. It is a blood-curdling sound. To hear dozens of sirens going at once in London is enough to freeze the marrow of one's bones. They rise and fall in a wail which are much more awesome than the sound of exploding bombs. Because of the peculiar wailing quality of the English siren, it is also known as the banshee.

Members of Parliament have frequently debated the desirability of changing the system of air raid warnings. A Conservative M.P. suggests the adoption of "something more musical and martial, in the nature of a post-horn or bugle call."

Many people feel that, instead of a frightening, depressing sound, the Alert should consist of something stirring, something in the nature of a challenge, something that would serve as a call to battle. Churchill brought laughter and settled one debate thus:

"A suggestion has been made which I did consider—namely, the display of a red flag on particu-

lar occasions when it was thought that unpleasant things were going to happen." The laughter, I suppose, had something to do with Britain's difficulties over Russia.

The English had considerable difficulty organizing the siren system at first. The Alert and the All-Clear seemed to bear no relationship to the presence of enemy planes. Communities would have hours of Alarm without seeing a plane and then, as soon as the Raiders Passed signal was given, a Nazi might swoop down to machine-gun people coming out of their shelters. There was much grumbling about it all. Now the system seems to be working smoothly. It has no doubt saved many lives.

The question of shelters is obviously the most serious problem of air warfare. It is discussed in a later chapter.

Among other measures that have been taken to reduce air raid damage in Britain are the protection of windows and the strengthening of houses to resist blast. Most of the windows in Britain are criss-crossed with pieces of gummed paper. Large shop windows may be screened with boards or wire. The authorities are now recommending a glue-covered gauze which is merely wet and stuck on the window. The principal value of these precautions is that they prevent glass from flying. In-

juries from flying glass are the most common received in air raids.

The English have built up an enormous civil defense organization. Paid and unpaid ARP (Air Raid Precautions) workers now number nearly 2,000,000 for the country.

The defense services have distributed enormous quantities of material. Among the articles which have been provided are 2,300,000 steel shelters, 60,000,000 gas masks, 3,000,000 steel helmets, 1,500,000 oilskin suits, and 350,000,000 sandbags.

The great civil defense organization must be credited with much of the success of British cities in resisting the Nazi attacks.

There are over 200,000 civil defense workers in London alone. They work with incredible bravery and efficiency. The following timetable, prepared by a London newspaperman, shows what a German bomb is up against when it drops in London. The newspaperman reported that a bomb fell outside his flat, bursting the water main and setting fire to the gas main. This is what happened next:

In fifteen seconds the first warden arrived.

In thirty-five seconds the first policeman arrived.

In eighty-five seconds a squad of troops arrived with sandbags.

In five minutes forty seconds the first A.F.S. (Auxiliary Fire Service) trailer pump arrived.

In eleven minutes fifty-five seconds the first

ambulance arrived, to take two casualties (glass splinters) away.

In thirty-nine minutes the first road repair squad arrived with pneumatic drills.

In one hour four minutes the fire was out.

In two hours fifty-five minutes the road was reopened to traffic.

In six hours thirty minutes we had still not cleared up the glass and plaster from the floors of our flat.

These civil defense workers, many of whom do not even have uniforms, are the heroes of the hour in Britain. Many have died at their post of duty; hundreds have been injured. They have worked through the heaviest raids without thought of safety, without thought of recompense, without even thought of glory. Many of the deeds of these men and women will never be recorded, but they will live imperishably in the memory of those whom they serve.

The king, appropriately enough, has announced the creation of a new order of gallantry, to be awarded to civilians. Two awards are given, the George Medal and the George Cross. They are a fitting tribute to the heroism of the ambulance drivers, the firemen, the rescue squads—all the ordinary men and women engaged in the Battle of Britain. They are, at the same time, a recogni-

tion of the new kind of war which has come to the people of our time.

Among those who have been cited are: a fire brigade superintendent who helped rescue people from a shelter enveloped in burning petrol; a couple of policemen who supported the fallen roof of a bombed house to release trapped people; two railway company employees who saved a burning ammunition train; a police constable who rescued a woman in a bathtub which was sliding into a deep crater; a constable who worked under a burst main for fifty minutes to save a man, woman and child; a police sergeant who ran at a couple of falling land mines, was blown off his feet, worked hours rescuing trapped people, went back to work and refused to report sick.

Women are playing a major part in the civil defense measures. They refuse to stay in places of safety and are in the streets, with men workers, in every raid. Many have been killed; many have been maimed. Others take their places. Like the men, the women of England will never quit.

Boys and girls are also being brought in through the organization of the Youth Service Corps. Members of this group, according to a report of the Board of Education, are doing seventy-six kinds of work of national importance, varying from digging gun emplacements to painting curbstones white.

The Nazis, according to their spokesmen, are waging "total war" on Britain. I wish to report that the British are waging "total defense."

The shock troops of the battle to save civilian lives and property are the members of the Auxiliary Ambulance Service and the Auxiliary Fire Service. Both services were created by the expansion of existing services. They have functioned with remarkable precision.

Both men and women are employed in the Ambulance Service. More than 8,000 are at work in London alone; there are also many unpaid volunteers.

First-aid posts have been established throughout the country. There are nearly 2,000 fixed posts. Some 800 mobile posts are also in operation, along with 14,000 ambulances and 15,000 ordinary cars for handling sitting cases.

Hospital services have been expanded to meet the needs of the Blitzkrieg. Approximately 300,000 beds have been provided in England and Wales, and about 30,000 in Scotland.

A blood transfusion service has been built up, with stores of blood for immediate use. Six thousand pints have been received from donors in America. (In the midst of much twaddle about Anglo-American relations, it seems to me that this is a most significant thing.)

Casualties have been much less serious than was expected.

"We expected," said the Prime Minister, "to sustain losses which might amount to 3,000 killed in a single night and 12,000 wounded night after night, and made hospital arrangements on the basis of a quarter of a million casualties merely as a first provision."

It takes courage—or something—to go to war in the face of figures like these. That's why the English won't quit. Anyone who will go to war when he expects to suffer 15,000 casualties a night isn't going to give up until he is either dead or victorious.

The authorities are keeping a close watch on public health. They are fully alive to the danger of epidemics in the abnormal conditions under which people are now living. Many people have been inoculated for typhus. The public is being advised to boil all milk, and the water is being tested hourly for pollution.

The London Auxiliary Fire Service (including the Women's Auxiliary) is, like the Ambulance Service, an expansion of a peace-time organization. The service was built up on the London Fire Brigade. Some 25,000 whole-time auxiliaries have been added to the permanent brigade which, meanwhile, has been expanded from 2,000 to 3,000 men. The streets of London, these days, are filled with fire

pumps. One can hardly walk around the block without coming upon an efficient-looking grey pump, usually hitched to a taxicab. The River Service has also been expanded, fourteen new fire boats having been added.

Fire plays a major part in the calculations of those who guide the bomber fleets. One fire, properly encouraged, can do more damage than a thousand bombs. Besides, fires light up the city and serve as a guide for new arrivals. It is impossible to estimate the number of lives saved and the property spared by the heroic labors of the fire-fighters.

Nobody knows how many fires have been started in London during the Blitzkrieg. They don't keep track of little ones. There have been around 30,000 important enough to be recorded. During the first fiery night, one unit was trying to fight thirty-three fires simultaneously.

I have seen the firemen playing their hoses on a fire while German bombers came along one by one and tried to drop their bombs into the blaze. If there is anything worse than a bomb exploding in a house, it is a bomb exploding in a burning house. Fire is bad enough by itself, without being spread by a couple of hundred pounds of high explosive. Fifty officers and men of the Fire Service were killed during the first month of the Blitz. Five hundred and one were injured. It is no wonder that the New York firemen who were sent over



by Mayor La Guardia to study the London services were amazed by the courage of the British fighters.

There are, of course, many other branches of civil defense. There is the care of those made homeless by bombs, the rescue of trapped people, demolition, the clearing up of *débris*, the maintenance of essential services and—last but not least—the problem of keeping up production.

There has been some criticism in English periodicals over the arrangements for the care of the homeless. It is said that, whereas tens of thousands of papier maché coffins were got ready for the dead, and graves were dug all over the country, nobody seems to have thought about the living. It appears that there was some confusion in the beginning about the care of thousands of people suddenly made homeless. It is easily understandable, for rarely has the government of a city been faced with a more acute relief problem than that which confronted London in the early days of September. Let's suppose that 50,000 or 60,000 or even 100,000 people were suddenly blown out of their homes in New York. It is quite likely that perfect arrangements would not be immediately forthcoming for housing, feeding and otherwise caring for them. The mere problem of clothes was staggering, for most of the refugees were left with

little beyond what they were wearing at the time of their dispossession.

London has done an amazing job of keeping essential services going. This also applies to the rest of the country. Unfortunately, the water mains of London, the sewers, the electric cables, and so on, are very close to the surface. They have frequently been blown up but, somehow or another, the workmen always contrive to get the services going again and London is able to carry on more or less as usual.

One of the most serious problems of the Blitzkrieg, of course, has been factory production. Production in the London area during the first few weeks of the German assault fell off by perhaps 30 per cent. It later came back, but for a time the prospects were not any too rosy.

At the beginning of the raids, workmen were inclined to run for the shelters the moment the sirens moaned. And in those days the sirens were going all the time. One of the newspapers finally ran a stinging editorial accusing the workers in a certain aircraft factory of cowardice. Gradually, as men and women became more accustomed to the raids, the time losses were reduced. Many factories and government offices have installed spotters on the roofs. The siren is regarded only as a preliminary warning; people do not go to the shelters until the roof-spotter indicates that enemy aircraft

are actually overhead. The system is greatly over-rated, but it seems to give the workers a welcome feeling of security, and for that reason may be justified.

Loss of efficiency due to lack of sleep was a great factor in cutting down production in the early days of the Blitz. I never before realized how precious sleep could be. Eventually, we got so sleepy that German bombs ceased to interest us. That was the point at which Britain began to lick the Blitzkrieg.

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## *Chapter 8*

# BOMB DISPOSAL

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ONE of the most hazardous jobs in the defense of England, if not the most hazardous job in the world, is the disposal of unexploded bombs.

Not all the bombs which land in England explode. Some are just naturally duds. Others are delayed-action bombs which may explode hours, days, and even weeks, after landing. The extent to which the explosion can be delayed is a moot question. Some authorities maintain that a real time-bomb goes off within two days; the ones which go off after that are probably duds which change their minds and decide to go back to work. Be that as it may, I have heard of them exploding a month after reaching British soil.

The Germans have used bombs of every con-

ceivable size and type in their attacks on Britain. The ones dropped in the greatest numbers, of course, are the incendiaries. These little play-things weigh a kilo (2.2 pounds) each, which means that a large bomber can carry about 1,000 of them.

Incendiaries are usually released in salvos of ten or twenty. Sometimes, however, the Nazis throw over a canister containing thirty-six bombs. The canister contains a small explosive bomb which, going off in mid air, scatters the incendiaries over a wide area. This tends to start a larger number of fires and also makes it more difficult for the civil defense workers to deal with the bombs.

The canisters, when used by the Russians in Finland, became known as "Molotov Breadbaskets," by which term they are also known in England. Sometimes incendiaries and small explosive bombs are fastened together and dropped over in bundles. The theory behind this package is that the explosives will create *débris* and that the incendiaries will then go to work on it.

Incendiaries are about fourteen inches long and two inches thick. They consist of a magnesium alloy casing containing a thermite core. The core ignites on impact and sets up enough heat to fire the casing. There is a violent spluttering and molten fire is thrown as much as thirty feet. The bomb burns with intense heat for ten minutes or

more. The magnesium will trickle through floorboards and set fire to everything in sight. Therefore, speed is the essential thing in getting the bombs under control.

The British have done very well in extinguishing incendiaries up to now. They may not do quite so well in the future, as the Germans are fitting some of their incendiaries with explosive caps so that a person attempting to put one out is likely to have it go off in his face. The government, as a result, has been compelled to warn householders and to advise that if possible they let experienced men deal with these bombs.

The Germans have been experimenting with a new type of fire bomb. It seems to consist principally of a drum of oil fortified by some sticky fluid which burns with unquenchable ferocity. The explosion of the bomb throws flaming liquid in all directions. The flames may shoot out as much as 100 feet.

One of these little toys fell behind my flat building in London. The blazing liquid shot up the wall and into windows on the third floor, burning out two flats. A doctor tenant was the only casualty. He was slightly burned when a great tongue of flame shot through his window and two thicknesses of curtain, to sear the inside of the flat.

Explosive bombs dropped on Britain vary all the way from 100 pounds to a ton in weight. The

one dropped near St. Paul's weighed 2,240 pounds and measured eight feet in length. Only a big plane can carry such a bomb. Most of the bombs dropped in England weigh from 100 pounds to 250 pounds. Five hundred pounders are not uncommon, but bombs of 1,000 pounds and over are rarely used.

Bombs have heavy cases and light cases. The heavier case causes greater destruction in confined areas. The light case gives greater blast. This latter type is known, quaintly enough, as a "personnel" bomb. It is very effective for crowded streets, yielding, as it does, a terrific blast and hundreds of jagged splinters to kill and maim.

At the beginning of the war, the Germans dropped magnetic mines. Lately, they have been dropping huge land mines on parachutes. These mines are about the size of a man's body. They settle gently to earth and then let go with a blast that will knock down everything within a radius of several hundred feet. One landed in a London street in the district known as the Elephant & Castle. It demolished ten houses on one side of the street and fifteen on the other. Another, which landed in the financial district, is reported to have damaged office buildings to the tune of \$12,000,000.

The British have succeeded in detonating a number of these mines by gunfire while they were on the way down. Others have caught on trees and

the projections of buildings, thus presenting a nice problem for the bomb disposal boys. One was recently caught on a tree in the Horse Guards Parade. It hung there for several hours, dangling just above the ground, until the Admiralty took it down. It was then blown up in Regent's Park.

Fortunately, not many of these mines are dropped. Fortunately also, it is difficult to drop them with any accuracy. They are suspended from very light parachutes about four times the size of an ordinary room. That means that they drift rapidly with the breeze. The Germans tried to drop a string of them along the docks at Liverpool. They drifted into a residential district. That was bad for people living in the vicinity, but very lucky for the great port area with its vulnerable basins and scores of oil tanks.

I have seen the marks of all of these types of bombs. The work of the land mine is easily the most awe-inspiring. However, the bombs which explode on impact are well calculated to make the blood run cold. They may make a crater in the street no larger than a washtub, but if you look carefully you will see that buildings on either side are turned inside out and that every flat surface for hundreds of feet in all directions is scarred from the impact of countless splinters. These splinters really get me down.

The time bomb, while it does not cause much



loss of life and—due to the possibility of disposal—is easier on property than other types, has a great nuisance value. One of these things lying in the middle of a factory can tie up production for days. One in a residential area compels the evacuation of dozens of houses. I know a roadway south of London which was closed for a month. There is no way to thwart a time bomb. You just have to keep out of the way until it either goes off or is removed.

Most of the bombs are regulated by a clockwork mechanism. Some are reported to contain acid which, eating through its container, eventually sets off the bomb. The delay in detonation presumably can be regulated both by the strength of the acid and the thickness of the container.

Time bombs are handled by the Bomb Disposal Section of the Royal Engineers, popularly known as the Bomb Squad. The Squad originally consisted of 150 men; there are now 2,600 in London alone. The work of these men has saved many lives, spared tens of millions of dollars' worth of property, and prevented traffic dislocations which would have been a serious strain on the country's war effort. Thanks to them, the time bomb has been conquered.

The first step in mastering time bombs, of course, is to find them. They land in the most unexpected places. A woman may find one in her garden.

Farmers have frequently come across them in their fields. Even in cities, in the excitement of a raid, they may lie around for some time before being detected. The bombs make small holes. They are found at varying depths, usually ten or fifteen feet.

The first thing the men do after reaching the bomb is to put a stethoscope on it. They have got it worked out to the point where they can tell, by the sound of the tick, how many hours the bomb has to go before it explodes. They don't often make a mistake. The acid bombs are more dangerous to handle than the clockwork bombs, as moving the bomb makes the acid work faster.

The Germans have tried many tricks to bedevil members of the Bomb Squad. Once the men found a bomb with two fuses. One looked like a proper fuse; the other seemed to be a phoney. They decided to yank out the phoney fuse, then and there. For some reason, they changed their minds. They attached a string to the phoney fuse, went behind a huge shield, and pulled the string. The bomb went up!

Bomb "necklaces" have also been used by the Germans to confuse Britain's civil defense workers. A "necklace" consists of bombs strung like beads on a steel cable. One of the bombs explodes on impact; the others are timed to go off at intervals afterwards. The theory is that the débris

thrown about by the first explosion will hide the other bombs, which will burst while rescuers are working among the wreckage.

The British maintain a laboratory for the scientific study of delayed-action bombs. Every step in the dismantling of a bomb is painstakingly recorded. When the men find a new type, they take it to a secluded place and go to work. The man who is to do the dissection stands next to the bomb. Behind him stands an assistant with a pad of small slips of paper. Each move made by the leader, even if it is only a quarter of a turn in the removal of a fuse, is recorded on a slip of paper and dispatched, via runner, to a safe place. Thus, if the bomb goes off, the next gang will know what not to do. Trial and error, with a vengeance. Unfortunately, some brave men have had to die to teach the English what they now know about time-bombs.

The Royal Engineers are experimenting with a method of freezing bombs to stop the mechanism while they are being taken apart. I have often wondered why it would not be possible to eat them up with acid.

The Bomb Squad's most spectacular job to date was removal of the bomb from St. Paul's Cathedral. This job was done by a "suicide squad" of five men, headed by Lieutenant Robert Davies. The men dug for ninety-six hours, every moment

in the presence of death, before reaching the bomb. They had to dig through twenty-six feet of gravel and sand. Even when they reached the bomb, it nearly eluded them, for it was slipping into a morass of black mud and slowly working its way under the cathedral.

The bomb was eight feet long and it was fitted with fuses which made it especially dangerous to handle. They got a tackle on it and tried to lift it to the surface. It slipped out of the tackle three times. Meanwhile, a gas main had burst and three men were sent to hospital with gas poisoning. The gas caught fire and began to bake the bomb. The men kept at it.

When the bomb was finally brought to the surface, it was placed in a truck and driven seven miles to the Hackney Marshes, where it exploded. Davies said that the bomb would go off at 6 o'clock. They took it out to the Marshes at 5:30. It went off at 5:58.

The *London Times* called the St. Paul's job "the outstanding deed of heroism so far recorded in the capital." The *News Chronicle* urged that Davies and his men be given the Victoria Cross, highest decoration for bravery at Britain's disposal. It seems that the Victoria Cross had to be ruled out; it is awarded for gallantry "in the presence of the enemy" and the enemy, although overhead at night, was not exactly present while Davies and

his men were at work. Davies instead got the George Cross.

Davies is a bit embarrassed by the hero-worship which his exploit brought him. "All a bomb can do is blow you up," he says, "and what goes up, must come down."

So far, Lieutenant Davies has received no injury except that which may come from lack of sleep. He treats all bombs "with healthy respect." He has been presented with a new stethoscope by the staff of a London hospital, in gratitude for his work in removing a bomb which fell in the East End. One of the hospital's senior surgeons, making the presentation, said that when a bomb fell and did not explode, they first called in the "local practitioner." Then, if the case required more extensive treatment, they sent for the "specialist." After the presentation, Lieutenant Davies—who has now become Captain Davies—went off to tackle a big one.

The biggest thrill Davies and his boys get out of their work, they say, is that they have speed cops escorting them, and the road is theirs.

Members of the Bomb Disposal Squad are all volunteers. They are mostly Welshmen, Irishmen and Canadians, and most of them have had experience as mechanics. They get no extra pay. Theoretically they should get extra leave, but actually they have not had any leave at all since

the Blitz started. They are always working against time and there are always more bombs than they can handle.

The only gripe they have is about food. They feel that, considering the work they are doing, they should get the best there is. I can't say I blame them.

Some of the boys, strangely enough, are known to take a wee drop on occasion. They get no special consideration in court. When two or three of them got noisy in a pub, after pulling the fangs of a nice 1,000-pounder, they were hauled off to court, subjected to a fatherly talk by the magistrate, and fined.

The trucks used by the squad enjoy a unique position in London traffic. It goes without saying that they don't have to ask for the right of way. A friend got tangled up with one in Oxford Street. Eight or nine cars had pulled up at a crossing, waiting for the light to change, when suddenly a policeman came rushing over to the drivers of the first two cars and motioned them to the side of the road—in fact, told them to drive onto the sidewalk. The rest were made to do the same and, in spite of much grumbling, the road was eventually cleared. Everyone wondered what all the commotion was about and what was coming. Along came an open truck with a great bomb in it, bumping up and down on the truck as it passed. On the

truck was the legend, "DANGER. BOMB DISPOSAL SQUAD."

Lunch-hour guests at the Ritz one day were asked if they would please finish their meals and leave the hotel by three o'clock. The reason was that a bomb was to be brought up Piccadilly and the hotel management did not wish to have any more people around than necessary. A few minutes after three, police on motorcycles came along clearing the street. Behind them came a truck with a bomb hanging from the tailboard. The bomb, according to spectators, was bouncing down to within six inches of the pavement. The driver proceeded unhurriedly to Hyde Park, where the bomb's fangs were pulled, and another block of London real estate was saved.

It is reported that one of these bombs exploded in a crowded street, killing sixty people. The truck just disappeared.

Two Americans went out to Highgate on a Saturday to play golf. In the clubhouse they encountered a sign: "Notice to members. Time bombs on holes number three, ten and eighteen." The correspondents said that old men in tweeds played the course unconcernedly. The old lady in the bar was asked what she thought about the bombs.

"Oh," she said. "I put covers on them. I was afraid my dog might mistake them for rabbit holes."

The engineers dug one out in Trafalgar Square. They put a stethoscope on it, decided that it was O.K. for a while, and went off to lunch. When they came back, it was gone; so was half the street. Fortunately the area had been roped off and no one was hurt.

A big fellow landed in a London recreation ground. The Bomb Squad arrived and went to work. A policeman, anxious to see what an unexploded bomb looked like, went near the hole.

"Hi, there. Be careful how you go," said one of the squad. "Don't knock anything down that hole. My mate's having a sleep."

The policeman turned his flashlight down the hole. Sure enough, there was one of the men fast asleep on the fins of a heavy bomb. Half an hour later the bomb was taken away and exploded.

I suspect that this man, like his friends who were taken out of the pub, may have had a drop or two.

One of the boys is reported to have made a fuss when he was being lowered into a hole. "Get me out of here," he yelled. His colleagues thought that the bomb was about to go off or that he had lost his nerve. Neither explanation was right. The man pointed to the hole, saying, "Not on your life. There's a big rat down there."

One of the difficulties of handling live bombs is keeping the public away from them. There was a great to-do in England early in November about



the case of one Frederick Leighton-Morris. Morris is thirty and, according to his physician, has only four more years to live. He therefore doesn't care much what happens to him.

When the war started, Leighton-Morris tried to join the Bomb Squad. They rejected him because of his lungs. He tried to join the War Reserve Police. They too rejected him. Then one night a delayed-action bomb crashed into the building where he lived in Jermyn Street. The man with four years to live went on the roof, located the hole made by the bomb and dropped through it. He found the bomb on a bed, standing up, in his own words, "like a beer bottle." It was a 100-pounder. Leighton-Morris picked it up and began to stagger downstairs with it. Once it slipped and crashed on his foot. He finally got into the street and began to walk toward St. James's Park.

Three policemen stopped him. One said: "You are under arrest for contravening a police order by entering a flat to remove an unexploded bomb." "All right," said Mr. Leighton-Morris, "I'll go quietly."

In Bow Street Police Court, the magistrate held that civilians must be discouraged from playing with bombs and accordingly fined Leighton-Morris \$400. A great clamor ensued. The newspapers fed the flames and in no time at all Leighton-Morris and his bomb were being discussed by

Mr. Churchill in the Commons. It was announced on November 16 that the Home Secretary had considered the case and, after consultation with the magistrate, was able to announce that the fine would be reduced to \$20.

"Grand news," said Mr. Leighton-Morris. "I am very thankful to everyone. I will pay the reduced fine."

Presumably, Mr. Leighton-Morris is still trying to get into the Bomb Squad.

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## *Chapter 9*

# GONE TO EARTH

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THE main problem of civil defense, of course, is the provision of shelters. As Stanley Baldwin said before the war, "The bomber will always get through." The British have stopped German bombers in the daytime, but they come over at will in the night. Thousands of persons have paid with their lives for the failure of the British Government to tackle the shelter problem with insight and determination.

The lackadaisical attitude of the British toward shelters is utterly incomprehensible to me. The British had observers in Spain. They saw what bombs could do to people there; they also saw what could be done to protect the people against

bombs. After Spain, the British had the example of Warsaw. Still they dawdled and bungled.

I remember the panic which swept over London at the time of the Munich affair. We literally ran around like rats looking for a hole to run into. One of the newspapers supplied its vendors with a huge placard reading, "Keep calm—and dig." Men dug frantically in the parks all day, and then all night. The one idea that ran through everybody's mind, over and above every other thought, was—*shelter!*

In view of the example set by other countries, and in view of their own fright in September 1938, it is just impossible to understand the apathy of English officials toward this number one problem of civil defense. The most charitable thing that could be said, I suppose, is that they were very old and very tired.

After the Munich surrender, the trenches were abandoned; the sides fell in and the trenches filled with water. In the Spring of 1939 ducks were swimming in the only shelters available to the people of London in case Hitler should carry out the Nazis' vaunted intention of "striking in the night, like lightning." Small boys used the trenches in lieu of the "ole swimmin' hole." One of the small boys was drowned. In this way, many people for the first time discovered the condition of their shelter problem.

Critics of the government policy all this time were continuing their efforts to evolve some kind of a shelter program and to put it into action. Some urged the construction of deep shelters; others proposed a series of heavy surface shelters. They agreed on the important thing, which was that something drastic must be done to meet the menace hanging over the heads of the people of Britain.

Proponents of the deep-shelter policy suggested that London needed additional subways. Why not, they asked, dig these subways now? In case of war, they would be available as shelters; if there were no war, or after the war, the subways would be ready for the pursuits of peace. Along with the subways could be built a chain of underground warehouses, garages, cinemas, nightclubs, and so on. These too, it was said, the city could use for commercial purposes. There were a couple of million idle men in Britain. It didn't seem illogical to suggest that they be put to work building things which London needed anyway and which, in time of war, would give the people a place of refuge.

The answer to this proposal, and also that with regard to communal surface shelters, was that there was not sufficient time. By the time the shelter problem became hot, of course, there wasn't sufficient time. The only thing to do then was to pro-

vide some kind of shelter which could be produced in a hurry, even though it might be little better than no shelter at all.

The government finally decided upon small, corrugated iron huts, to be supplied to individual householders. The huts were to be half buried, the remainder being covered over with earth. They were given the name of "Anderson shelter" as a tribute to the Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson.

A total of 2,300,000 steel shelters were built. They are supposed to accommodate 11,500,000 people. Most of them are cold, damp and crowded. I don't see how people can live in them, but millions of Britons nightly crawl into these tin huts to enjoy whatever security they provide against German bombs.

The public originally seemed to have the idea that the Anderson shelter was bomb-proof. The newspapers contributed to this misconception in the early days of the war by running pictures of undamaged shelters with craters nearby. Eventually, of course, bombs began to fall on the shelters. It must have come as a great shock to many people to discover that their safety depended not on the strength of their shelters but on the law of averages.

This shelter problem is as much a matter of politics as it is of defense. The privileged classes somehow manage to find protection. They live in

substantial houses; they have basements and vaults; they live on or near open places; they live further away from military objectives; they can always go to the country. Air bombardment is likely to fall most heavily on the poorer, more congested sections of a city. And the houses in these districts are much more dangerous to be in than the mansions of the rich. The little brick houses of London's East End collapse, a block at a time, from blasts.

The most dangerous part of the Blitzkrieg, in my opinion, was the point at which the people of the East End discovered how pitifully inadequate was their protection compared to that available in other parts of the city. It seems to me that Hitler made a great mistake, from his standpoint, in turning his attention to the financial and mercantile districts and to the West End. It gave the people of the East End a chance to protect themselves. It also gave all the elements of the population a community of interest which they otherwise might not have reached.

The bombing of Buckingham Palace was a really colossal blunder on the part of the Germans.

Hitler's mooted plan to panic the East End and promote revolution did not work. Either he turned the heat off too soon, or the British were just too tough. The people crawled into whatever holes they could find. They took safety—or relative

safety—wherever it was to be found. They got through the first terrible night, the first awful week. They have now adapted themselves to a new way of life and can probably go on more or less indefinitely.

A million Londoners are now sleeping away from their own homes. One hundred and fifty thousand of them are living in the subways. Others are living in garages, department store basements, office buildings and warehouses. The crypt of the historic church, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, is filled. Whenever the raids are bad, crowds of people huddle under railway arches.

Twenty thousand people lived for weeks in a huge vault in the East End. They slept in chairs, upon benches, and on the brick floor.

Six hundred people, evacuated to Oxford, were put in a cinema. They slept in the seats or on the floor. Their principal complaint was that they got tired of looking at the blank screen all day, and they asked if they couldn't please have a picture.

London is located on a muddy plain and it is difficult to do anything with tunnels unless they are thoroughly reinforced with steel and concrete. Some British cities have been fortunate in having caves in the vicinity. The entire population of Ramsgate can live in perfect safety in an abandoned railroad tunnel near the city. The people of Reigate have an excellent tunnel. The people



of Dover, who get not only bombs from the air but shells from the French Coast, spend much of their time in a series of caverns behind the city. Abandoned coal mines are being used in several parts of the country.

Eighty-five per cent of the people of London are still living in their homes. That doesn't mean that they sleep in their own beds. The majority of them, I should say, sleep on the ground floor or in the basement. Many sleep under a stairway. Some sleep under their beds instead of in them; others prefer to lie under the kitchen table. If there is a baby in the house, you are quite likely to find it in a dresser drawer.

A representative of the Dutch East Indies Government, when asked for his address, said, "The Coal Cellar," and then went on to name the house in which he lived in London.

There is much argument in Britain over the relative safety of the different parts of a house. Although most people prefer the ground floor or the basement, there are some who cling to the upper floors. One London firm has built a shelter for fifty on the roof. The idea is that most bombs penetrate a considerable distance before exploding and that the further one is away from the place where they explode, the better.

There is also much argument about just what constitutes a bomb-proof shelter. I saw shelters in

Spain upon which direct hits had been made. The roofs and walls were six feet thick. The ARP Committee of the Association of Architects, Surveyors and Technical Assistants have informed the British Government that five feet of reinforced concrete will stop anything up to 500 pounds. It takes twenty to thirty-five feet of earth, according to the Committee, to give the same protection.

There is only one really bomb-proof shelter in England. It has reinforced steel and concrete walls 12 feet thick. The cost of building such shelters is prohibitive. There wouldn't be enough steel and cement, even in a country like America, to accommodate the whole population. My observations, both in Spain and England, have convinced me that deep shelters are the answer. If these shelters can also be used for subways, garages, and the like, so much the better.

The Government is now making a study of indoor shelters. A family in Streatham decided to build a good strong brick shelter. Instead of putting it in the back yard, they had it built into the living room. In this way they got the protection of the house in addition to that of the shelter. They also solved, at one fell swoop, the problems of heating, ventilation and sanitation. There is the added advantage that work on this type of shelter can go forward twenty-four hours a day, as the men do not have to quit for the black-out.

Some people have even been sleeping in trenches—the trenches begun in September 1938 and later completed. Most of them have since been covered over. The Government intends to equip the trenches with bunks.

The pleasantest shelters are those run in conjunction with hotels and night clubs. Most of the large hotels have excellent basement shelters. Some of the restaurants and night clubs allow guests to stay for the night. Sometimes the customers get cots; more often than not they stretch out on a couch or lie down on a couple of pillows behind the cocktail bar.

Animals are not allowed in public shelters. This has caused many people, who would not leave their pets, to remain in places of extreme danger. London's first air raid shelter for dogs has been constructed in Hyde Park. It has a concrete roof and accommodates thirty-six animals, each in a separate compartment.

The actual building of shelters, if and when accomplished, creates a brand-new set of problems. Among them are health and sanitation, heating, feeding, policing and entertainment.

The health problem is very acute in London shelters. It is a miracle that the city has not had a major epidemic long before this. With people packed in like matches in a box, disease can spread very rapidly. So far, to the best of my knowledge,

serious diseases have been held in check, but colds and flu are common.

Sanitary arrangements in the beginning were non-existent in many shelters. Today, they are primitive but they are rapidly being improved. Some of the places in the East End were veritable cesspools. I recall hearing of a sugar warehouse where thousands of men were urinating against a wall of sugar boxes. The case eventually was brought to the attention of the Minister of Food, who got his sugar out of there in a hurry. It is just impossible to describe the conditions under which countless thousands of people were compelled to live at the beginning of the Blitzkrieg.

A committee, under Lord Horder, was appointed to make recommendations for safeguarding the health of shelter-dwellers. The recommendations of the committee were published, but the report itself was not. This led many to suspect that the report was too hot for those in charge of shelter policy.

The authorities are supposed to have asked Lord Horder to promote better health conditions in the shelters. Horder, a plain-spoken man, is said to have replied: "Give me better shelters and I will."

With or without better shelters, the doctors are doing their best to hold disease in check. Some of the larger shelters have a staff doctor and a nurse or two assisting. Smaller shelters have only a nurse

or a matron. A system has been worked out whereby private physicians agree to take over a group of small shelters and to visit each one in the course of an evening. This system seems to be working very well and should enable the authorities to nip an epidemic in the bud.

The heating problem is simplified by the fact that English winters are mild and by the further fact that the people of this country are used to cold and dampness. If it were not for this fortuitous combination, Britain's plight during the winter would have been doubly serious. The Government promised that no expense would be spared to heat public shelters and that electric stoves would be provided for the others.

The million people who nightly use shelters originally had to bring their own food and drink or go without. Arrangements are now going forward for the supply of hot food in public shelters and in the subways. The Ministry of Food announced at the end of November that 149,000 people were then being served in 814 London shelters. Food is brought into the subways by special-trains and dispensed by 1,000 waitresses.

In shelters, as everywhere, there is need for law. The police have had some trouble with drunks and petty thieving. However, there has been little serious crime.

The determination of priorities at shelters has

been a vexing question. People used to stand in line half the day in order to make sure of getting into a shelter when the evening sirens went. That necessity has now been obviated through the printing of a million tickets. Every person who has a ticket is sure of getting into his shelter and, therefore, does not have to go there until he is ready to bunk down for the night.

When there were more people trying to get into shelters than the shelters could accommodate, men were asked to stay out and take it. This was especially the case in the subways. The London Passenger Transport Board put it up to the men thus:

"The space at the tube stations is limited. Women, children and the infirm need it most. Be a man and leave it to them."

The police, who thought that their work ended with the All Clear, have now discovered that they have a daytime shelter problem. Lovers, it appears, have found the shelters a convenient place to be alone. I noticed when I was in Spain that the Spanish police had the same problem. They finally locked the shelters up when not in use. The London police are now doing the same thing.

Morale is an important aspect of shelter life. It is difficult to be cheerful when you are lying on a cement floor or leaning against the tin side of an Anderson hut. What is more important from the national viewpoint, one is apt to lose a bit of his

enthusiasm for final victory. A people with less discipline and less determination than the British might have revolted long ago against the conditions under which many of them are now living.

The government is making strenuous efforts to lighten the burdens of shelter life. Musicians nightly make the rounds of the larger shelters. The music of Bach and Chopin is dispensed with a vim and charity not common to peace-time concerts. The musicians go out regardless of bombs and barrage. They lug their instruments on their backs. At a Chelsea shelter, under a greengrocer's shop, they discovered it was impossible to get the piano down the steps. That didn't stop them. The artists who could get their stuff into the shelter went in. The pianist stayed in the street and, to the accompaniment of bursting bombs and the crack of guns, played for all he was worth.

The various city councils are evolving schemes for widespread entertainment in their shelters. They include, in addition to music, motion pictures and lectures. Christmas parties were given at most shelters, and pantomime shows, beloved of English children, were brought to those now living underground.

There has been a great boom in reading as a result of the enforced inactivity of shelter life. The Bishop of Chelmsford has appealed for a list of the "hundred best books" for reading during air

raids. The bishop thinks that the list should exclude works which are in any way heavy, as "it is very difficult to concentrate with enemy airplanes overhead." The good bishop doesn't need to worry on that score. Among the literature found in a shelter at Stepney were books with such interesting—and appropriate—titles as "Vile Bodies," "The Dying Alderman," "Stealthy Terror," and "All Passion Spent."

One night, early in the Blitz, I made a tour of tube stations now being used as shelters. The Holborn tube is the most crowded in London. Six thousand five hundred people nightly pack themselves into this station. It is an incredible scene. The station is on several levels, which adds to the macabre aspect of the whole thing. People crowd into every available inch of space. They sleep on the floor, on the stairs, on the escalators' sides, bracing themselves with their feet against the lamp standards.

The crowd appeared to be orderly and fairly goodnatured. Mothers pushed breasts and nursing bottles into the mouths of hungry babies; lunches were spread out and bottles of beer opened; many people were reading the papers; there was much conversation.

The wardens apparently are chosen for their ability to handle masses of people. It was amazing to see the quiet, tactful way in which they took



care of those crowds, letting them use as much space as possible and still keep lanes cleared for the use of passengers.

Agitators have tried to force the trains to stop running. I do not see what good that would do, as it would only interrupt the normal life of the city and keep hundreds of thousands of other people from reaching the relative security of homes in outlying districts. Here, it seems to me, is an example of the shortsighted viewpoint that is all too common with professional agitators.

The air in the stations was hot and stale. I felt a bit nauseated, but those who were sheltering there did not seem to mind. The authorities were a bit worried about an epidemic of coughing. They have also had to cope with a new disease known as "shelter rheumatism."

Ray Daniell, head of the New York *Times* London Bureau, suggests that the British subways should be known, henceforth, as the "Bronchial Tubes."

About 150,000 people, as I said before, are now sleeping in the London subways. Tunnels to accommodate an additional 100,000 have been started. They will be completed next autumn. In addition to disease, there is also, in some of these tubes, the ever-present danger of flooding and gas leakage.

After leaving Holborn tube, I went over to the

Savoy to see some friends. Churchill was just going on the radio when we got to the hotel. The lounge was full of people listening to the speech. Many of them were in dressing robes, on the way to the shelters in the sub-basement. The Savoy has a very elaborate shelter, with permanent beds reserved for everyone staying in the hotel. They have separate shelters for men and women and another section for married couples. The service is very de luxe and includes a waiter in a dinner jacket who awakens snorers and helps them turn over.

I saw many familiar faces in the lounge, including Frank Kelley, Scottie Reston, Fred Bate, and Leslie Hore-Belisha. I could not help thinking, as I looked around that luxurious hotel, of the contrast between the lot of those sleeping in the tube stations and the people living at the Savoy. In the tubes, they lay on the cement with their feet in each other's mouths. Here, they slept in clean beds, ate the best of food and enjoyed de luxe service. A few weeks ago, a group of refugees came into the Savoy during an air raid and refused to leave until the All Clear went. I marvel that the masses do not walk into these places and just take them over. That wouldn't solve all their problems, of course, but it would help to solve one problem in a hell of a hurry.

The Blitzkrieg, in the short space of a few

hours, converted the people of London into would-be troglodytes. Everyone who could went underground. Those who could not get underground got as close to the ground as possible. Life in London, says a wit, has now become like an iceberg; it is nine-tenths below the surface. The hunting set say that a fox who has got into a hole has "gone to earth." The population of London, pursued by Goering's bombers, has "gone to earth."

A new kind of life is emerging. People have suddenly found themselves routed out of the Twentieth Century and thrown back into the recesses of the Stone Age. Hundreds of thousands of people are today living a life not much different from that lived by the Piltdown Man.

The whole psychology of national life has been altered. Babies are born underground. Old people die there, and there young people pledge their marriage vows. Games that can be played in small spaces are being evolved. The stores feature shelter clothing. One London newspaper has installed a feature called the "Shelter Corner"; another handles shelter news in a special department called "News from Underground." It is amazing how people can adapt themselves to changing conditions; it is amazing what people can learn to do without.

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*Chapter 10*

DIGGING THEM OUT

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MOST of the people who have lost their lives in air raids, at least in the London area, have been killed not directly by the action of bombs but indirectly through the collapse of buildings. By the same token, the major life-saving function of the defense organization has been the rescue of trapped people.

The men of the rescue squads have done some truly amazing work. They have dug people out from under tons of débris hours and even days after they had been buried. I don't know how many people owe their lives to the work of these men, but the number must run into the thousands. They work inhuman hours and they carry on without thought of food, rest or safety. They work

through smoke, flames and water, and the crash of falling bombs. They are just another bunch of heroes in the army of heroes evolving from the siege of Britain.

Consider the case of Jack Reaves, a London chauffeur who was buried. Reaves was trapped in a car in a basement garage, where he had taken shelter with his wife, a 13-year-old girl, and eight members of the Auxiliary Fire Service. When the building collapsed, all were killed except Reaves.

Rescue workers went to work. For seventeen hours they struggled with the débris. They tried to dig down from the top; they tried to tunnel. Fire broke out. Seven times German planes came over to drop fresh bombs. The men toiled on.

Eventually, after burrowing through twenty feet of stone and brick, the men reached Reaves. They found him half choked and with a fractured shoulder, sitting in his car. His wife, whom he had married two months before, was dead in the back seat. A hole was cut in the top of the car and a nurse went down to dress the man's wounds. The rescue squad had saved another life.

Early in November, George Baker, a London ARP worker, was standing on a heap of rubble when he thought he heard a sound. He put his head into the débris and listened. He heard a child cry. He shouted. Back came a woman's

voice. It subsequently developed that the voice belonged to the wife of a life-long friend.

"What day is it?" the woman asked.

"Friday," Baker shouted back.

"We have been here since Tuesday," came the muffled voice. "For God's sake get us out."

Five hours later a Mrs. Steptow and her two daughters, Doreen, aged seventeen, and Pat, five, were dragged into the sunlight. They had been sleeping under an old kitchen table when their house was demolished by a bomb. Steptow, a post-office employee, was killed. He was only partly protected by the table, because he had given most of the space to his wife and children.

A woman employee of a printing works was rescued alive after being buried fifty-two hours. A number of other people had previously been saved. This building, like many others, had also caught fire. Sparks and embers flew as rescue workers dug in the débris. The men moved tons of woodwork and stone before they found any sign of life. The first voice they heard was that of an official of the printing firm:

"This is the assistant manager. I am pinned down. Can you get to us?"

The rescuers went at it with redoubled energy. They could hear the man's voice from the thickest part of the wreckage. He told them he was near a woman but that she seemed to be dead.

"But further off there are some others and, if you come quickly, I think you will get them out alive."

It took several hours to tunnel through to the man. Only one rescue worker could get into the tunnel. He came back and reported that the assistant manager's head was just visible. A doctor squirmed into the hole and gave him a shot of morphine. Soon after, thirteen people were brought out alive.

One of the first victims to be released was a young girl. She had been pinned beneath a block of concrete.

"She was only a youngster, but she had plenty of courage," said one of the rescue workers. "She helped by warning us when more débris looked as though it might come down. Just as we were ready to lift the block, there was a heavy fall and her face was covered by a foot of rubble. Yet, when we cleared that away, she was still smiling."

A lorry driver was the hero of another rescue. Peggy Byng, a thirteen-year-old girl, was trapped in a cellar during a raid on a South Coast town. Peggy had gone to the cellar with her mother, her sister and two brothers. Peggy was the only one to come out alive.

The lorry driver was a man named George Palmer, known to his friends as Curly. With fire raging overhead, Curly tunneled his way into the

basement. Eventually he reached the child. She put her arms around his neck and for ten hours, while rescuers worked away on the débris above, and while firemen fought the flames, Curly lay by the child.

Peggy's father, Isaac Byng, had left the house a few minutes before the bomb landed.

"When I got back," he said, "I found my house down. If I had not gone out I should have been caught as well. I wish I had been. We were able to talk to mother and the children until there was an explosion, which caused the fire. After that, we were only able to talk to Peggy."

Many people have been buried in their Anderson shelters. Most of them have survived. Baby David Parr, two, was buried without knowing it. When rescue workers dug David out, he was still asleep.

Not all victims are trapped in basements. Sometimes they get caught on the upper floors of a house. A number of people have been taken from precarious perches on sagging floors or swaying walls. For facilitating this sort of rescue, the London Fire Brigade has been equipped with new 100-foot turntable ladders.

In one of the first raids, a nurse was trapped fifty feet above the street. She was the only woman left alive out of a group of six caught in a London Hospital. The nurse was pinioned in a tan-



gled mass of masonry and twisted girders. Rescue workers pulled the masonry away and cut their way through the girders with acetylene torches. Doctors climbed up and gave the woman a morphia injection. They bandaged her wounds and gave her food and oxygen. After many hours, she was brought down alive.

Many animals have been rescued, along with people, from the wreckage of London. Twelve days after a bomb had fallen on a London school, somebody said to George Warner, fifty-six-year-old member of a stretcher party, "There's life in that débris."

George went to work. He expected to find people. Instead, after digging through ten feet of rubble, he found a cat, a parrot and a dog. The cat promptly ran away. The parrot continued squawking in its cage. The dog licked Warner's face.

"I brought her out as gentle as you like," said Warner. "She's mine for life."

Nine persons, trapped under a London tenement, owe their lives to a canary. The trapped people were too exhausted to cry out, and rescue workers were unable to locate them. They were tunneling—in the wrong direction—when one of them heard a canary. They altered the course of their tunnel and soon found fifteen people, nine of them alive. Wedged in a crevice under twisted girders, in a pile of wreckage, the canary, in a

battered cage, sang on until it too was carried to freedom.

A hazard of being buried in London has been the fact that, in many cases, no one knew that there were people in a wrecked building. This has been especially true of caretakers looking after vacant houses. Most caretakers now put signs in the windows of houses they are looking after, to let rescue workers know they are there in case the building comes down. Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., has recommended to the Home Secretary that people living in dangerous areas should carry strong whistles for signalling their whereabouts if they should be trapped.

In addition to the rescue of people, the removal of débris has been a serious problem in English cities. An army of 20,000 civilians and soldiers is being built up in London for this work. Miners have been brought from Wales to assist on especially dangerous jobs.

Every effort is being made to salvage valuables and material from the wreckage of buildings. The men are being assisted in this work by fifty experts from the London Salvage Corps, an organization maintained in time of peace by insurance companies. It is estimated that about ninety per cent of London's bombed débris is used again. Sound timber, unmelted lead, anything that may be of use, is saved. Bricks are picked out and neatly

stacked ready for use in the building of air raid shelters. Rubbish is carted off to down-river marshes and dumped.

There has been some trouble about valuables. Fortunes in silver and jewels are being dug out of the ruins of London. Some of the boys find themselves unable to resist the temptation to slip something into their pockets. In ordinary times this wouldn't be so serious, but in time of war it classifies as looting. And looting can be punished by death. So far, the government hasn't invoked the death penalty, but sentences of five and ten years have been freely dispensed.

There is an American in London doing rescue work. His name is Patrick Featherstonhaugh. Pat is an architect. He used to be with Albert Kahn in Detroit; later, with Smith, Hinchman and Grylls.

"Architects are in great demand," he told me. "You see, a man who puts houses together is also good at taking them apart. So, whenever they get a lot of people under a building, they ask for a technical man to show them how to go about it without having the whole building come down."

Pat said they have had some terrible jobs. He likes the technical side of the work, but he cannot stand the gruesome stuff.

"I don't look at it any more than I have to. When they get to the bodies, I walk away."

Pat says the devotion of his men is inspiring. When they get on a job, they pay no attention to fatigue, hunger, danger, or quitting time. Most of their work, of course, is at night. They stretch a tarpaulin over the wreckage, rig up lights and go to it, heedless alike of enemy bombs and splinters from anti-aircraft shells. A number of men have been killed or injured on duty. Pat told of one of his own men who was hit in the stomach by a piece of shrapnel.

"He was a nice lad," Pat explained. "We put him on a stretcher. He did not want any attention. 'Just carry on, and give me a cigarette,' he said. In a little while, we noticed that the stretcher was soaked with blood. We turned the lad over and found that half of his back had been blown away."

The casualties in bombed houses, as great as they are, are fewer than one would imagine. The floors and timbers seem to fall into arches in a way that saves many lives. Pat told of a girl who was trapped with her employer when an office building was demolished. The building caught fire and burned for several hours. Eventually, the firemen got the blaze out and rescue workers went to work on the débris. The girl was rescued, almost unharmed, after twenty-six hours. The man was dead.

Pat told of another job where, after hours of work, his men dug out an elderly laborer.

"Don't mind me," he said, impatiently. "Find my old woman."

They went down another twenty feet and pulled out the missus.

"Leave me alone," she yelled. "Get my old man."

More than one person has disappeared in the bombing of London. Pat cited the case of a family which had gone to the basement when a raid began. After a time, the man of the house went upstairs to get a drink of water. A bomb came down smack on the house while he was gone. The six people in the basement escaped with minor injuries. No trace of the man was found.

It is suggested that some of those who have disappeared during air raids may have taken advantage of the situation to get away from home. No doubt, such cases do exist. Most of those who have disappeared, however, are believed to have been destroyed by bombs.

One of the best known examples is that of the stationmaster in a southwestern suburb. He was walking down the platform, lustily calling a train, when a large-calibre bomb landed beside him. Call and stationmaster disintegrated in a single, blinding detonation which wrecked the station and killed a large number of commuters.

Most of the people trapped in air raids are cheerful and helpful. Occasionally, however, the

rescuers have difficulty with those they are trying to help. People will complain bitterly about the failure of the men to unearth trivial objects from a mass of wreckage. The men do not mind digging for pets, as Englishmen are very kind to animals, but they find it hard to get sentimental about gadgets and bric-a-brac. One young woman was very irate because, in a desperate effort to save some people, they scratched her furniture.

Pat says he is always being asked about the safest place in a building. His stock reply is, "There isn't any. Some people like the upper floors and some people like the lower floors. Generally speaking, if it is properly shored up, the best place is the basement."

Pat himself sleeps under the dining room table. A doorway is some protection, and the space under the stairs is regarded as especially safe.

Modern steel and concrete buildings are much safer than the older types. The old brick buildings, without reinforcement, just fall in a heap. Some architects claim that there has not yet been a case in London where a high-explosive bomb has gone through more than three floors of a modern building. Pat is inclined to think that that is only true because no modern building has yet been hit at the right angle.

The British have had to revise their procedure

in rescue work. They used to attempt to go in from the top.

"We soon found that that was a tedious process," Pat explained; "the people would be dead by the time we could get to them. We got in a man who had had experience in Spain. 'You've got to tunnel,' he said, 'tunnel every time.' Now we are tunneling on most of our jobs. We usually find that the best way to go at it is to go in from the building next door, especially if there is a basement to work from."

Pat believes that a new type of architecture will come out of the war.

"Hitler is doing a great job of slum clearance," he says, not without some elation. "After the war, we will have a great opportunity to experiment with some decent housing. I wish we could take people out of the slum areas. Unfortunately, men have to work, and they have to live near their work. If we cannot take them out of those areas, we can at least make the surroundings reasonably attractive and give them decent houses to live in.

"This won't be the last war. Therefore, we might as well get at the problem of deep shelters right now. We should shove tunnels under the city, tunnels that will carry people and goods in time of peace, and serve as shelters in time of war. We could build underground warehouses, garages, cinemas, restaurants. We need these things,

anyway. Let's build them now. Nothing less than deep shelters and a completely new conception of air raid precautions will suffice to make England again an island."

Just before leaving England, I met a Cockney who had been buried beneath the ruins of his fish-and-chip shop. Fish-and-chips are not my idea of the proper food for building morale. However, there was nothing wrong with the morale of this chap. When the rescue workers dug him out of the remains of his little business—which by now consisted of a potpourri of fish, fat, bricks and plaster—he dusted himself off, drew himself up to his full five feet seven and spat into the wreckage.

"To 'ell with 'itler."



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## *Chapter II*

### “TO ’ELL WITH ’ITLER”

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I USED to think that the English were an effete race. The stage Englishman, as we know him in America, certainly gives one that impression. It is all wrong. These Englishmen are tough babies, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

I doubt if the population of any other great city could have taken the punishment which has been inflicted on London. All elements of the population stayed and took it with truly amazing fortitude. The English wince when they hear the word, but I can't resist telling them once more that they have guts.

They also have, strangely enough, a sense of humor. I don't know who is responsible for the legend that the English can't see the point of a joke.

Maybe they aren't good at banter, but when it comes to a big thing—say a Blitzkrieg—they can find more things to laugh about than anybody I ever saw. Sometimes their laughter is a bit grim but, so far at least, they have been able to take everything the Nazis can deliver and come up with a smile. The British don't waste their energy on imprecations. Maybe that's why they win wars.

The doctors have not discovered a single case of shell shock among the civilians of London; nor have there been any nervous break-downs that could be attributed to bombing. The explanation, in my opinion, is simple. Englishmen are trained not to show their emotions. That includes fear. The result is that, while an individual Englishman may be scared to death, he doesn't communicate his fear to others and, to do anything with a city like London, you have to induce mass fear. That, Hitler has been unable to do.

I have found myself torn between two emotions about these people. One is admiration for their ability to take it; the other is an unworthy hope that they will, somehow or another, come to terms with Hitler and stop punishing themselves. I can't stand the sight of blood and mangled bodies. It makes me sick even to look at the wrecked houses. Sometimes I have found myself hating the English because, by taking it themselves, they were making me take it. Yet, in my heart, I know

that they have no choice except to see this thing through.

There is no braggadocio about British morale. The people don't, like Ajax, shake their fists at the lightning. They just go about their business with a calm fatalism that has proved more than a match for anything that the Germans have yet been able to unloose. This is the more remarkable in view of the misconceptions which were prevalent in Britain before the Blitzkrieg began.

The British suffered two great shocks which, to a more volatile people, might have been serious. The first was the discovery that they had little or no protection against bombs. The second was the discovery that German machines could come over in the night-time at will. The British public did not realize at first how much night bombers were going to have things their own way.

Like the Tommies in the trenches during the last war, the British have called upon all their reserves of cheerfulness and good humor to help them through the dark nights of the Blitzkrieg. To a stranger, it almost seems callous the way they make light of the heartrending tragedies now taking place in London and elsewhere. That is not really the case. The British are not insensitive to pain. Making light of their troubles is merely an expression of their natural resiliency and of the

calm inner confidence which they have in ultimate victory.

This confidence, pride, phlegm, or whatever you may care to call it, is evident in every raid. One of the best examples concerns a young lawyer who was pleading a case in court when several heavy bombs fell nearby. The building shivered and dust poured through an open window. The president of the court yawned.

"Forgive my intervention," he said to the young lawyer, "but would you care to have a glass of water to clear your throat of the dust?"

A bomb which fell in London blew a man thirty feet onto the roof of a saloon.

"What a place to land," he shouted. "Could I have a drink?"

"I suppose you have had a pretty poor time?" said a man to a friend from a distant city.

"Yes, terrible. They keep trying to put the wind up us."

"Bombs?"

"No, falling bombers. We have to keep dodging them all the time."

A friend tells a delightful story about his visit to the docks at the very beginning of the Blitzkrieg. An old watchman in a warehouse was a bit perturbed because his son wouldn't take cover. He went into the street and gave the lad a cuff on the ear.

“Get the hell inside,” he said, “and let that shrapnel fall down.”

A crowded London hotel was hit for the second time in four days. The band struck up and the guests sang “Pack up your troubles” and “There’ll always be an England.”

Humorists, both amateur and professional, have been outdoing themselves in the production of jingles. Here is a sample:

They run like hell in London  
Whenever there’s a raid.  
They run like hell in London  
Because they are afraid—  
That someone hurt in London  
May be in need of aid.  
They run like hell in London,  
The police, the A.R.P.,  
The firemen and the nurses  
Although they cannot see.  
They run like hell in London  
From dark to break of day,  
And though it’s hell in London  
They do not run away.

The insistence of the people on enjoying their usual pastimes, Blitzkrieg or no Blitzkrieg, is expressed in the following:

I was playing golf when the Germans landed ;  
All our ships had gone away and all our men  
were stranded ;  
And the thought of England’s shame  
Nearly put me off my game.

The authorities originally attempted to discourage talk of bombing. It was no use. It would be easier to make a man talk about the weather in a burning house, or aboard a sinking ship, than to expect people who are being bombed not to talk about it. The agitation for less bomb talk found expression in a notice displayed on Oxford Street by a solicitor; "Give me sixpence for my Spitfire Fund and I will listen to the story of your bomb."

Even the children have found a lighter side to the Blitz. A London schoolteacher reports:

"My children are wild little creatures, eighty per cent of whom have been through the Battle of London up to date. But they have the Cockney air of defiance. Yesterday we came across the line, 'Oh, to be in England!' I waited for someone to go on, but no sign. Then I said, 'That is the first line of a famous poem. Do you know who wrote it?'

" 'Hitler,' someone shouted. There was a wild yell of joy from the whole room."

A house had been badly bombed. One of the rescue workers was cleaning up the mess. A small boy, standing nearby, was heard to say, "'itler's ousemaid."

The American Consul in a West of England town went to inspect an enormous crater which had swallowed up a workman's cottage. He found the workman gazing reflectively into the hole.

“Tell America,” he said, “that we aren’t down-hearted. We can take it.”

The gem of the war, so far as I am concerned, is the crack allegedly made by an old lady one night when planes were coming over at the rate of one a minute, and bombs were falling like confetti. The old lady looked casually at the sky.

“That ’itler,” she cackled, “’e sure do be a fid-get.”

New forms both of art and of humor have been born in the wreckage of shops, houses and factories. The instinctive reaction of most people is to nail the Union Jack on the highest splinter. If they don’t hang up a flag, they are likely to stick up some kind of a sign evincing the determination of a true Briton not to let any nasty Nazi get him down. The shopkeepers are especially inventive. They must lie awake nights thinking up the amazing inscriptions to be seen today in England.

There is something of a Britisher’s innate conservatism, as well as defiance, in the sign put out by a department store: “Business as usual—almost.”

If a publican loses his windows, he probably will put up a placard informing his customers that he is “more open than usual,” or he may dub his place the “Fresh Air Café.” A restaurant owner used this sign: “Goering or no Goering, we are still doing our boiling teas.”

The people who own and inhabit pubs seem to be the principal contributors to this symposium of modern British humor. I must mention one more publican, the man who told his customers, "They've broken our bottles but they can't break our spirits."

Churchill set the pace in the preservation of morale when he declared that "neither by material damage nor by slaughter will the people of the British Empire be turned from their solemn, inexorable purpose." The owner of a wrecked house said the same thing with less eloquence but equal determination when he chalked simply on the sidewalk, "There'll always be an England."

It is this quiet confidence in the imperishability of their empire which gives the English strength to go on.

A Bermondsey undertaker probably did not realize the grisly implications of the sign which he put on the remains of his establishment. It seemed the most natural thing in the world for him to say, "Business as usual. Wreaths and crosses to order." He was a bit annoyed when people came around to point and laugh.

A tiny cottage lay in ruins in Cardiff. The owner had put a neat placard on the wreckage. The placard contained four words. They were: "For King and Country."

A news agent's shop was wrecked during the



battering of Southampton. The news agent promptly moved into the street, buttressing himself with this placard.

“Hitler comes and Hitler goes, but we go on for ever.”

Air Marshal Joubert, speaking in London, said:

“I wish the German High Command could see a little greenshop somewhere in this city. It has been knocked out, but the owner still goes to market to buy his cabbages, the fruit which comes to us so regularly from overseas, and his other wares. He spreads them on a stall outside the ruins of his premises, and on the stall is the following notice: ‘Don’t worry about this. We are carrying on. Our branch business in Berlin is in a very much worse state.’ ”

For some reason it seems to help us in adversity if we think our enemies are also suffering. The British are no exception in this respect.

The “to 'ell with 'itler” attitude has done much to keep the factories going in England. Many workers who used to take shelter now work through the heaviest air raids. “To 'eM with 'itler,” they say, and carry on.

Women and boys are forced to go to the shelters. George Sclater-Booth, who used to make bodies for automobiles and now makes wings for airplanes, was telling me about the situation at his plant. The problem there, apparently, is to induce peo-

ple to take cover. One of the men who cleans up the shelters complained that a shelter used by some of the girls was in a horrible state. It was a litter of paper and small pieces of cloth. Upon investigation, it was found that the girls were bringing fabric into the shelter and going on with their work during Alerts.

The other day Sclater-Booth heard a terrific racket in one of the shelters used by boys. He went down, intending to give the boys hell for creating such a disturbance. He found them very busy at work. They had brought in the materials for making ribs for plane wings, and were busy putting them together on the benches. He had already started to bawl the boys out before he noticed what they were doing. He said he felt very foolish about it.

Everything that I have seen in England indicates that the British, who are so expert at leading with their chins, are equally expert at keeping them up.

The English have personalized their enemy. They have little to say about the German people (a mistake, in my opinion, for it is the German people they will have to lick). They blame their troubles on Goebbels and Himmler and Goering and Hitler. Most of all, they blame Hitler. Our Cockney friend, climbing out of the ruins of his fish-and-chippery, expressed the feelings of the

whole nation when he said, “To ’ell with ’itler.” Some of the people would put the proposition with greater elegance, but the feeling would be exactly the same. If the Germans ever decide to discontinue the war, they will have to get a new Fuehrer. The English will never make peace with any German government headed by Adolf Hitler. Until they achieve their objectives—the overthrow of Nazism and security for their island—they will never quit.

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## *Chapter 12*

# DIRECT HIT

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ONE evening at the beginning of the Blitz, as I was scooting across Chelsea Bridge, I heard a string of big ones come down on my right. We used to live in Chelsea. My wife rhapsodized over a tiny Elizabethan cottage there, and my children played in Burton Court. I got to wondering if any of the places we knew had been hit. The next morning I decided to run over and look around.

I hadn't been around our old neighborhood since before the war. It gave me a pang to see the old, familiar places—the cinema, the tobacco shop, the butcher shop, the little bakery on the corner, the silversmith who seemed never to get a customer and yet somehow managed to prosper.

It hurt to see what had happened to the places we knew and loved in Chelsea.

Our little house was intact, but some of the other houses in the block had been banged up. The cinema bore a tell-tale sign, "Closed until further notice." The tobacconist had lost a couple of his windows. The bakery was boarded up, while the butcher, who used to supply us with excellent beef, was handling his customers on the sidewalk.

There was a snack bar in the King's Road near our street. I remember how we once got the proprietor to try his hand at a hamburger sandwich. He had no idea what a hamburger sandwich was. "Just grind up some beef," we said. "Fry it and put it on a roll." He did, and the result was not bad. However, we were never able to get him to add hamburgers to the menu. When I saw him last he had more important things on his mind. He was pushing glass into the street and trying to get some chicken wire for the front of the bar.

My garage was a wreck. The neighborhood theater, where we first learned to appreciate an English music hall, had also been damaged. We used to take our American friends to this theater as fast as they arrived. We figured it was a good way to show them a side of the English character which is not properly appreciated at home.

I was glad that my wife and children were

safely in America, and not with me, when I returned to Chelsea.

In Smith Street, just around the corner from the cinema, there was a big crater. The fronts of several buildings had been damaged and there was hardly a window left within a radius of several hundred feet. Gas and water mains had been destroyed. There was still gas about and wardens were warning anyone who had business in the street not to strike a light. A pool of sewage in the bottom of the crater gave off a bad odor, a nauseating reminder of the ever-present possibility of epidemics in the wake of air warfare. Fortunately, there had been no loss of life here.

Another bomb had fallen beside Swan Court, a large flat building just off the King's Road. Although many windows were broken, and some flats literally blown inside out, the only casualty in this building was a Pekingese dog. The force of the explosion had bent a huge iron girder at one point. Coal had been blown out of the basement. The blast had gone completely through some of the lower flats and into the courtyard, raising the devil in there. The building stood, however, and showed the great superiority of modern steel-frame buildings over the older types.

A couple of houses had been demolished and several others damaged in Bramerton Street. The demolished houses were just piles of lath and brick

and mortar. The workmen said there were six bodies in the wreckage. Three of them, we heard, were the wife and children of a doctor whose first wife had been killed by a bomb in the last war. I asked where the doctor was.

"Oh," said one of the wardens, "he's over at the hospital. He's been working all night."

I went up King's Road and turned into Beaufort Street. Here a high-explosive bomb had made a direct hit on a shelter that had been built under the street in front of a block of flats. So far as the authorities could make out, there had been about sixty-five or sixty-six people in the shelter. Six were brought out alive, but two of these died in ambulances on their way to the hospital.

It was a horrifying shambles. The bomb had hit the front of the building, glanced to the pavement and gone through to the shelter, exploding inside. The bomb is believed to have been a 500-pounder. The concussion of a bomb that size exploding in the confined area of a small underground shelter must have been colossal. One can only imagine what the effect must have been on the poor souls—mostly women and children—who constituted the objective of this particular bomb. Certainly death was instantaneous and they were spared alike the mental agony of waiting for death and the physical agony of dying.

No doubt most of the victims were killed by

blast. Those who were not were crushed by falling débris. The shelter had a concrete roof eighteen inches thick. The roof was lifted clean off the shelter; it then broke up and fell on the people below. The roof fell in great slabs eight and ten feet square. The greatest difficulty in the rescue of the living and the removal of the dead was the disposal of these slabs. The men went after them with pickaxes and crowbars the first night. Later, a crane was brought in and all of the slabs were moved.

The bodies, of course, were horribly mangled. The word "body" really should not be used to describe the remains which were removed from this shelter. Many were taken out on shovels. The pieces were carried into the flat building and laid out on the floor. The workmen put them together as best they could; it was a hopeless task. Human folly had shattered forever these frail vessels conceived in the likeness of God.

One of the women had, at the moment of death, or perhaps a little after, given birth to a child. There was no way to identify the mother. Rescue workers put the baby in the arms of one of the least mangled of the women and I am sure they will be forgiven in heaven if they made a mistake.

A woman in an openwork pink jumper lay peacefully in the débris, her face half hidden by tousled hair. She was cut off at the waist.



The body of a soldier was taken from under a slab. His head was found elsewhere.

A little girl, apparently about four years old, was brought out without a scratch.

The RSD men (Rescue-Shoring-Demolition) worked like slaves. They worked all through the first night, on through the day and into the second night. Few men have ever had to tackle a more grisly task than theirs.

The ambulance drivers, mere slips of girls in most cases, also came through in great shape. It was the first time they had been called out. They stood by, day and night, ready to rush to hospital any of the victims who might be brought out alive. The men praised one poor girl, only twenty-one, who, although she turned green and couldn't eat, stood by like a veteran until the job was done. The girls washed out their ambulances and got ready for another call.

A few days later a couple of these girls were to lose their own lives. They went to a house which had been blown down except for the front wall. While they were waiting for rescue workers to bring out the injured, the wall collapsed.

The relatives of victims are a terrible problem in disasters like the Beaufort Street hit. The police just have to be firm, as they cannot run the risk of interruptions which might add to the death roll. A man stood at the barrier for hours in Beau-

fort Street. He had a wife and seven children in that shelter. They were all killed.

The men were working on a big slab when I got there. Under the slab were the remains of six people. The men raised one end with a derrick and succeeded in getting out what had once been two human beings. They were now just two piles of raw flesh, bearing no resemblance whatever to the human form. They consisted mostly of entrails. There was no sign of an arm, a leg, or a head. There was no sign of clothing. One of the piles of flesh, a mound the size of a bushel basket, was rolled onto a blanket and carried away. The other had to be scooped up with a shovel. The flesh was so tangled up with the concrete that the men could not get it out in one piece. The man with the shovel calmly chopped it in two.

Tiny globules of waste matter ran onto the bottom of the shelter. They soaked up the pulverized concrete and moved about nervously like mercury on a dusty floor. A strong, terrible, human smell filled the air. Once, when I was young and tough, I cut up a deer with an axe. The entrails burst. The odor was exactly the same as that which I smelled in the shelter.

I turned sick at the pit of my stomach and nearly fell into the hole. I looked at the workmen to see how they were taking it. They went right on with their work. They were drooping with fatigue and

hollow-eyed for lack of sleep, but they dared not stop. They dared not waste any time on the dead. There might be life in that stone. That was all that mattered then.

Why does it hurt so to see a mangled body? All bodies ultimately disintegrate. When all is said and done, is it not better to go in a single, blinding flash than to rot in the ground? Reason tells us that it is better to go quickly, but it is always such a shock to see a person who has gone that way.

When I came to Chelsea with my family, three years ago, I hardly expected to see a scene like this in the peaceful streets of our neighborhood. Joan, who was eight, went to school around the corner from this scene of destruction and death. The chances are that some of her playmates were in this shelter when the blow fell. Some of them may have been in the shelter when I was there. Perhaps one of those pitiful little piles of flesh . . . I believe that I am reasonably brave; at least, I have faced danger many times and have been able to resist the impulse to run away from it. I can take it myself. I don't know whether or not I could take it if my wife and children were to be involved. That is where total war hits hard and that is where total war has its one chance of success. The things that bombs do to you aren't so

bad; it is the things they do to those you love that really hurt.

Intermingled with the débris in Beaufort Street were the blood-soaked remains of blankets, pieces of cloth, shoes, books and magazines. Most of the shoes were empty, but I heard that one of them still covered a foot. The men had picked up handbags and ration books which would never be needed. Of all that which had been in the shelter, only one article seemed to have escaped injury. That was a feather pillow. Blast does not mean anything to a feather pillow; nor do slabs of concrete. The pillow lay lightly in the débris, unsoiled, undamaged, unmourned.

One of the wardens, a slim, elderly man, directed the work of removing the bodies.

"They got my house last night," he said simply.

I heard from one of the other wardens that, while this man was working on a job, someone came running to tell him his own house, a few streets away, had been hit. The house and all of his belongings had been destroyed; his wife and children, fortunately, had gone to a nearby shelter. I asked the man what he would do if he could lay his hands on the airman who had dropped the bomb. He gulped a couple of times and I waited eagerly to hear what sort of punishment he would be prepared to mete out.

"Well," he said slowly, "I don't think I would give him a cup of tea."

That is the nearest thing to a recrimination I have heard in England.

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## *Chapter 13*

### MARX COMES TO MAYFAIR

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FOR three years, in the West End of London, I have had my eye on a vacant house. It is a very fine house, five stories high and boasting a basement. The basement, as in most English houses, probably contains the kitchen, the pantry, scullery and a servant's room or two. The street floor no doubt contains the dining hall. The second floor (first floor in England) almost certainly consists of a great drawing room. The third, fourth and fifth floors would be given over to bedrooms. I can only imagine what the inside of this house looks like. I have never been inside of it. I have only studied the outside during idle moments when I might leave my desk and look out of the window

and possibly meditate a bit about what makes this little country tick.

This house is not really vacant. It is furnished. It seems to carry a full staff of servants. So far as the owners are concerned, however, the property might well be said to be unoccupied.

Twice a year, as regular as clockwork, the owners would put in an appearance. We always knew when they were coming. The curtains would go up. There would be much sweeping, and cleaning of windows, and shaking of cloths. Sometimes the woodwork got a coat of paint. The front steps would be scrubbed and a red carpet would be laid.

Sometime during the afternoon a couple of large automobiles would draw up and an elderly man, an elderly woman and what looked like a couple of spinster daughters would get out. The servants would rush to the front door. There would be restrained but friendly greetings all around and the woman, followed by the daughters, followed by the husband, followed by the servants, would move majestically indoors. The chauffeurs would drag prodigious quantities of luggage from the inside of the cars and off the roofs. This too would disappear into the recesses of the house.

A couple of weeks later the process would be repeated—in reverse. Out would come the baggage, followed by the man, followed by the

woman, followed by the two daughters, followed by the servants. The two cars would move slowly away. The red rug would disappear. Down would come the curtains and the great house would go to sleep for another six months.

Came the Blitzkrieg. A tide of humanity flowed out of the East End, moved across the river and spread westward. They had to have shelter. One morning a couple of lean men with serious faces came to the house. They went in, stayed a few minutes and then came out to chat on the steps. One made motions with his hands, pointing at the basement, indicating windows which needed sandbagging. The other one nodded. He took a piece of chalk from his pocket, went up to the ornate, heavy door and, in a jagged scrawl, wrote "EVAC."

Marx had come to Mayfair.

The war has resulted in a sharp accentuation of the trend toward socialism in Britain. The British realize that, in fighting Germany, they are opposing a revolution of tremendous force. They know that *laissez faire*, regardless of its efficacy in an expansionist era, cannot stand up against an integrated regime like that which has been built up in Germany. In time of war, nations almost invariably turn to state control. England has done just that. The difference between this experience



and previous experiences is that this one is apt to be permanent.

Hitler long ago was reported to have said that Germany would win the war because, whereas she had had her revolution, England's revolution was yet to come. Hitler apparently felt that the English revolution, coming in the middle of a war, would cause the country to collapse. With a less patriotic and less conservative people that might have happened. It has not happened in England. The English are having their revolution now and they are having it so successfully that the forms of democracy have hardly been touched. The country's war effort, instead of being retarded, has surged forward and upward to ever greater heights.

The war is bringing every person in England an opportunity to participate in the national effort according to his capacity. Women take their place staunchly beside the men. Even children are given a chance to serve. The English know that, to oppose a totalitarian machine, you must quit behaving like a flock of birds.

Yes, England is changing. An Englishman's house is still his castle—unless there are some bombed-out mothers and children to be accommodated. Into a London hotel one evening walked an official from the local council.

"I want your ballroom tonight," he told the proprietor.

"Sorry," replied the proprietor, "you can't have it tonight because we have got a dance on."

"Very sorry," said the official, "but I've got a dozen families who need a dormitory."

The dance was canceled.

Next to his house, an Englishman dotes on horses. The army needs horses, large numbers of them. An orderly comes to your country place and asks to see the horses. You trot them out. The orderly runs his hand down their legs and looks in their mouths.

"I'll take this one, and this one, and this one," he says. The children cry; mama probably cries too. But the army needs horses to go out to Egypt, to fight the Italians. That's all there is to it. In due course you get a check for \$200 for horses which cost you \$3,000, and the matter is closed.

This is a people's war. Most of the appeasers in pre-war Britain were found among the nobility and among the representatives of big business. They have now recanted and are taking as active a part in the war as the government will allow. Churchill is running the country with a coalition government in which Labor has the balance of power. He has brought in such men as Herbert Morrison, leader of the socialistic London County Council, and Ernest Bevin, horny-handed General

Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union. Churchill and his Conservative Party colleagues run the political and military end of the show; Bevin keeps the factories going. Bevin is ably assisted by William Maxwell Aitken, better known as Lord Beaverbrook. Beaverbrook, although rich, is as far from the traditional British ruling class as Bevin. His newspapers give enthusiastic, even violent support to the war, and his diatribes against "rich slackers" are almost worthy of the *Daily Worker*.

Few people, either inside or outside the country, realize the power now possessed by the British government. The Emergency Control Act gave the government absolute control over persons and property. It can move people at will. It can shift workers from one factory to another, or send them into the fields. People can be made to work; those who stay away from the job can be fined or imprisoned.

The government can confiscate property. It has the power to take all of Lord Nuffield's money if that should be necessary. The government can take houses, factories, land. Furniture may be commandeered for the use of people made homeless by air raids.

The government has these powers. So far, they have not had to be used to any extent. They will be used if necessary.

One of the first things the government did, after the outbreak of war, was to take measures to prevent the flight of people, goods and capital. A few wealthy people got away in the early days of the war; also, the families of some government officials. That has now been pretty well stopped. Men are not allowed to leave the country, nor women between the ages of sixteen and sixty. A few manage to circumvent the law, but the government is proceeding to block up the holes.

Those who do succeed in leaving the country are allowed to take very little with them. The women are limited to one fur coat, no matter what its age, and of a value not to exceed \$120. They can take jewelry to the value of \$40; even wedding rings and watches have to be left behind if they exceed this amount. Each adult is allowed to take \$40 in cash.

Foreign securities held by British citizens must be made available to the government. American securities have already been requisitioned; Canadian stocks are in process of being called in.

Food rationing was introduced immediately upon the outbreak of war. Luxury foods are being driven off the market. A basic diet has been worked out by experts to make sure that everybody gets enough to eat and that, at the same time, shipping space is not wasted in the carriage of non-essentials.

The production of many types of merchandise is being reduced. Among the goods affected are corsets, gloves, lace, furs, pottery, furniture, cameras, musical instruments and perfumery. Some of these cuts were made to conserve materials needed for the war effort. Others seem to be part of a general policy of discouraging the luxury trade. Certainly, the amount of steel required for corsets wouldn't make many guns.

All industry is now subject to government supervision in Great Britain. Controllers have been appointed to regulate the production of basic commodities. These controllers function through the Ministry of Supply. Foods are handled through the Ministry of Food (there is even an egg dictator). The Minister of Mines has supervision over coal and petroleum. All imports require licenses, and many exports also.

The government is policing prices. Food dealers have been fined as much as \$4,000 for charging more than the official rate. Scotland Yard is even keeping an eye on taxi drivers who, in the first nights of the Blitz, used to auction themselves off. The government has put a ceiling over the price of clothes, pots and pans, knives and forks, flashlights, black-out material, and a long list of other articles. Permanent prices have been set for essential foods. The price of coal, and gas and electricity rates, have also been pegged. The prices of luxuries are

not regulated. The more they cost, the better the government will like it as high prices will help to keep down production.

Farm prices have been stabilized. The government, in order to stimulate home food production, has guaranteed the present system of fixed prices and an assured market for the duration of current hostilities and for at least one year afterward. Prices are subject to adjustment in case of substantial changes in the cost of production.

Farmers are being controlled like everyone else in war-time England. The dictum of agricultural policy is that all acres must produce. Farmers are told what fields to plough, what to sow, what manure to use. If they fail to acquiesce, their land is seized.

The English have been smart about Labor. Instead of cramming the war down the throats of the workers, they have made the workers partners—and senior partners at that. Bevin is in there pitching and he has the overwhelming majority of British Labor behind him. I don't know how long it will last, but up to now Labor has played a dominant and aggressive role in the conduct of the war.

The workers have not, as yet, had to make any great sacrifices. Wages have remained more or less stationary, going up a little if anything. The cost of living, meanwhile, has not been greatly increased. The eight-hour day is still standard;

those who work more than eight hours receive overtime, usually time and a half. All in all, Labor has fared quite well in the war and has had to sacrifice less than other segments of the population. This is especially true of organized Labor. The burden to date has fallen principally on the rich and the middle class. This reservoir eventually is going to dry up. That will be Labor's opportunity for the display of real statesmanship.

The social services, which were expanding quite rapidly before the war, have now become truly colossal in their scope. Most of the services have, of course, been geared into the war effort. No doubt many of them will continue in time of peace.

Education, unfortunately, has had to be greatly curtailed as a result of the war. Most of London's schools are closed. Children in the country generally go half days. The private schools (called public schools in England) are suffering from greatly reduced enrollments, as older boys have joined up and many parents can no longer afford to send their children to these expensive institutions.

The British are now spending about \$50,000,000 a day on the war. This is one method, I suppose, of redistributing wealth, even though it is the wrong method. Americans who worry about their taxes should take a look at British taxes. Income taxes start at \$10 a week.

There is also an excess profits tax, under which the government takes 100 per cent of all earnings in excess of a key period before the war. Inasmuch as many firms were making little or nothing during this key period, they are now operating without profit and, in some cases, they claim, even at a loss.

The stringent measures adopted by the British in order to prosecute the war have led some people to complain that democracy is dead in England. It all depends on what you mean by democracy. If you are thinking of free capitalism, as we used to know it, then democracy is dead in England. If you are thinking of a way of life which will guarantee to everyone an opportunity to make a decent living, to enjoy liberty and to have a say about who shall govern the country, then democracy is very much alive in England. The British may have to give up some of their privileges in order to make the transition from one kind of a system to another. So far, however, they have done a pretty good job of preserving essential liberties at a time when the country has been fighting for its very existence.

There is still a lot of democracy in Britain. Newspapers are, of course, restricted in what they can write of a military nature. There is no restriction, however, of their right to pan the government, to criticize its policies and to urge new ones.



The treatment of the Ministry of Information by the press is a case in point. The Ministry has been criticized and ridiculed and belabored since the day it was established, and it is being run ragged today.

There are conscientious objectors to the war in England. The country treats them well. They are allowed to appear before a tribunal and, if they can show they are legitimate objectors, they are not compelled to bear arms. Their townsmen may toss a white feather in their direction, but the government does not harass them.

People seem to be able to say more or less what they please. H. G. Wells was given an exit permit, which the government easily could have withheld, to go to America to air his views. The government has plenty of authority for suppressing disloyal or defeatist talk, but it is rarely invoked.

Leaders of the British Union of Fascists were, of course, locked up at the beginning of the war. The principal reason for their detention was not so much that they were members of an unfriendly political party, but because they were tied up with the enemy. Only 1,000 were detained. Ordinary members were not molested, and many of those who were locked up are now being released.

German and Italian men have been detained. As rapidly as they can show they are all right, they

are being released. Many are now being given an opportunity to join the Pioneer Corps.

We should remember that Parliament is still functioning, and that members are free to say what they like. They have had very few secret sessions. Every aspect of government policy seems to be discussed openly—perhaps too openly. It may be that the British would be better off if they had less democracy than they have at the moment.

Right now, in the middle of the war, the British are beginning to plan for the future. The principal war aim, of course, is to win the war. Millions of Britons, however, are looking beyond the war to the peace. They visualize something better than the disequilibrium of the last twenty years. Moreover, they want not merely peace but a new way of life. They are talking about new homes to replace those which have been demolished by bombs. The dust had hardly settled over Coventry before the city fathers produced a model for a new civic center. A billion dollar scheme for the rebuilding of London, based upon the so-called Bressey Report, is being widely discussed. Town planners, engineers, social workers, labor, are all taking an active interest in plans for the rebuilding of Britain.

It is very obvious that there are many points of similarity between what is going on in England today and what has happened in the U.S.S.R., in

Italy and in Germany. The controllers who regulate the supply of commodities in Britain inevitably suggest the commissars of Russian industry. The control of foreign exchange, import licensing, and scores of other measures now enforced in England, have been used by the Nazis for years. The result is that many people are driven to ask, "What is the use of fighting against Nazism, which is merely an abbreviation for National Socialism, if we are going to get these things ourselves?"

There are two answers. One is that, even if we were to get National Socialism as a result of the war, we want to do the job ourselves and not have it foisted on us by a foreign master. The second answer is: There is a great difference between what is happening in England and what happened in Germany.

The English revolution, in the first place, has been accomplished without bloodshed. A few people have been locked up, as I said before, not so much because they differed with the government but because of foreign associations. There have not been any executions that I know of. There have been no purges, no tortures in concentration camps. I have not seen any castor oil. I do not believe there are any rubber truncheons in Britain.

There has been no racial persecution. The English do not need a whipping boy to change their government. The only refugees in England are

those who came from other countries. They have generously been given asylum by a people who may have difficulty in feeding themselves. One occasionally hears a disparaging remark about Jews in England but, since the imprisonment of Mosley and his Blackshirts, anti-Semitism as an organized movement is dead.

The English change-over, whatever it is and wherever it is going, is not being accompanied by attacks on other countries. Patriotism in England, like true patriotism anywhere, means to love one's own country more instead of loving other countries less. Just as they have not had to have a domestic whipping boy, the English have also been able to forego the use of an international whipping boy.

The English have not had to perpetrate any absurd doctrines of racial or national superiority. The average Englishman thinks that his country and his empire are pretty good. He thinks that he as an individual is pretty good. He probably believes that the English language is destined to become the language of the world. His faith in himself is apt to be a bit annoying to foreigners, but there it is. Because he has that faith, he doesn't have to follow phoney professors who tell him that all other races are inferior; nor does he have to prove, with trick charts and ethnological boloney, that only people with round hairs and blue eyes are fit to rule.

The English don't believe in isolationism; they believe in collective security. They don't believe in economic nationalism; they believe in freer trade. Whatever their sins may have been in the past, they are pretty reasonable people to get along with in the world of today.

I don't know where the English are going. They don't know themselves. They have been evolving in the direction of socialized effort for many years. The war has merely hastened their evolution. I believe that the English, with their respect for law and their sense of discipline, will continue in the path of evolution and not revolution. At least, they have a better chance to go that way than the rest of us.

I look for a Labor government in Britain after the war. The British had a Labor government once before but, for one reason and another, they muffed the play. I believe the coming Labor government will do a better job than was done by that of Ramsay MacDonald. God only knows what form the job will take, but that it will be in the direction of centralized control is inevitable.

I don't know of any better way to show what is happening in England than to quote Ernest Bevin. Bevin is Number Two man in the present British government, and what he says is bound to carry a lot of weight. He said in a recent interview:

"England will never again tolerate large num-

bers of unemployed. England will never again tolerate the waste of skill that has gone on for so long. The big lesson of this war is that wealth is not land to walk over, or money in the bank; but skill.

"The profit motive will not and cannot solve the large problem of the reconstruction of this country. The old capitalism is finished."

Asked what he thought would take the place of capitalism, Bevin said he did not know.

"The first thing we have got to do is to win the war." After that, said Bevin, will come the task of "making a world that people like to live in."

The British are always being asked to define their war aims. I suggest they refer all inquiries to Bevin.

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## *Chapter 14*

# COMMUTER

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I WAS living in the country when the Blitzkrieg began. I was staying with some American friends, Edward and Ruth Treglown, on the Treglown estate in Sussex. Five or six times a week, depending on circumstances, I had to get into the office. When the trains were running, or at least running with some dispatch, I came by train. Otherwise, I drove.

Getting into or out of London during the first weeks of the Blitzkrieg was no mean task. I had to do 100 miles a day—fifty miles up, fifty miles back. It was supposed to be fifty miles. Actually, the journey might jump to sixty miles. It was very rarely the same for two consecutive trips, for in the morning I would have to get around bombs

left the night before, and in the evening avoid those left during the day.

Inasmuch as the Germans originally tried to come over during rush hours, both morning and evening, I frequently had to drive through raids. This was especially true at night. My road was hit fourteen times, several times while I was on it. There were many near hits, and innumerable time-bombs. The detours were appalling. I have had as many as nine on one trip. There were rarely less than three.

Here is a typical journey:

It is late when we leave the Embassy, a rainy, cold night, and we worry about getting home before dark. Before us lie fifty miles of tortuous city traffic and winding country road, the traffic made heavier by the rain and the road made infinitely more winding by the detours we shall have to make to get around bomb holes.

Let's cut over to Hyde Park. Somehow, one feels safer in an open area. The idea of flying bricks and glass unnerves me. I imagine that the good earth soaks up the force of bombs and protects one from everything except a direct hit. Besides, there are good trenches in Hyde Park. I feel safer in a trench than anywhere else.

The traffic in the Park moves quite rapidly. The police do not seem to be enforcing the twenty-mile limit. This is strange. It takes more than a



war to undermine the enforcement of laws in Britain. The other day, they hailed into court several members of the Auxiliary Fire Service. It seems that, after putting out a great fire, they had committed the unpardonable offense of picking up some trinkets out of the débris. It was suggested that the men be tried for pilfering. No, sir, said the judge, we'll try them for looting. Their superior officer had to leave his precious fires and spend a couple of hours in court on behalf of his men. The men were released on bail, and on the officer's promise to see that they were in court when their case came up. Such is British justice. Anyway, we are able to sail through the Park at thirty miles an hour instead of the usual twenty, and to reach Hyde Park Corner very quickly.

Battered, this corner. Just inside the park is one of the largest craters we have ever seen. It must be sixty feet across, and it has lifted the pavement for another twenty feet all the way round. The King's old house at 145 Piccadilly has been blown inside out. Behind the house, in Park Lane, another bomb fell on the sidewalk, throwing cement in all directions, blowing down a section of heavy iron railing, and uprooting a large tree.

From Hyde Park I always scoot over to Belgrave Square. In this way, I avoid Victoria Station. Victoria Station is a bad place to be, especially during rush hours. The Germans make

it a practice to come over when people are on the move, and they like railway stations. Most of them have been hit at one time or another. They carried bodies out of Paddington, the other night, all night long. Victoria has been hit several times, but the trains are still running.

A quick run from Belgrave Square to Chelsea Bridge. Here, we really step on it. Every vehicle on the bridge gets across in the least possible time, each driver casting an apprehensive eye on the giant power station and on the great gas tanks on the left.

Just off the bridge, a bomb has fallen in a side street, neatly slicing off the fronts of two buildings. A few blocks further on, we come to an enormous pile of bricks, the remains of three substantial houses. Beyond the wreckage, standing naked in the rain, are the pipes of a church organ.

Going up the hill to Clapham Common, we see craters on either hand. They have come down the street just inside the sidewalks, blowing up the front yards. Two different planes must have released strings of bombs that went down both sides of the streets. The houses are pretty well banged up by the blast, but no one has been hit directly. At one place there is a pile of bricks which was once an air raid shelter. We wonder if it was occupied when the bomb came down.

On Clapham Common, people are queueing up at the air raid shelters. They look patient and unafraid. Most of them have bundles containing bedding for the night. There are many women and children, and some men. In a few minutes, when the shelter is open, they will go down into a damp hole and spend 12 hours there trying to get some rest. Some will have camp cots and deck chairs, but many will sleep on the floor.

Across the Common is Streatham. I wonder what the Millers are doing. They were very elated yesterday because they had found a shelter which was less crowded than the one they had been using. They have found one where they can use deck chairs. Now, they say, they will be able to get some sleep.

The Common looks peaceful. The A.A. boys have installed a battery of heavy naval guns there. The Germans have tried to hit them and, though the Common is a large one, most of the bombs have missed it completely and landed on houses round about. South of the Common, a great time-bomb landed in the street. The bomb disposal fellows got to it and hoisted it out with a derrick. While they were putting it in a truck, the rigging slipped and the bomb fell on the pavement. It went off that time. By some strange freak, all of the men escaped injury. They threw themselves on the pavement and the blast went over them.

Trinity Road. A familiar red sign:

DANGER

UNEXPLODED BOMB

The first detour—diversion, over here. We work our way around and eventually reach Nightingale Lane. This is no mean feat in an English city, where no street is straight, where streets do not go anywhere in particular, where every other street is a cul-de-sac, and where no two streets ever seem to collaborate to help a traveler on his way. In Nightingale Lane, men are still working in a huge crater made three weeks ago. They are surrounded by sewer pipes, water mains, gas mains, electrical conduits, and all of the other veins and arteries that flow beneath the streets of a modern city. The stench is terrible. Before the war, it was predicted by many that German bombs would destroy the mains here and make life impossible. This they have not succeeded in doing.

On the left, a pile of bricks and kindling, once a house. I used to think that my house in the country was pretty substantial and that it probably would withstand anything. That was before I saw this house. This was also a substantial house. Now it means nothing except a job for some haulage contractor.

This bombing certainly changes one's notions about things. I never knew houses were so flimsy.

They seem to crumble like matchboxes. The bottom is blown away and the rest of the house just falls in a heap, like a woman shedding her clothes.

It looks as though the Jerries are coming. The police have got their gas masks open. There goes the siren. Here's an ARP warden shepherding some women with baby buggies across the street. They look a bit apprehensive; probably they are hurrying to a shelter. And look! Look at that field. Dozens of children running for shelter. The field is full of trenches. Some of the children, dropping behind, jump into the trenches. So this is war—1940 style.

Mitcham. Here is the greatest piece of devastation I have seen anywhere in England. There is a whole block missing. The Germans apparently dropped an aerial mine. I gave a lift to an ARP warden one morning, and asked him how many people had been killed.

"I am not supposed to discuss it," he said, "but I can tell you that we have had forty bodies out so far."

Across the street is a modest shop bearing the sign, "A. Lane—Saddler." I picked up the proprietor once. He was standing in the rain waiting for a bus, and I took him to Sutton. He was a nice old gentleman, solid, substantial, tolerant.

"I have been in that shop forty years," he said. "I never thought I should see times like these.

They have blown my windows out twice. Now I cannot get any more glass. I suppose I shall have to board the place up and work by artificial light."

The inhabitants of Mitcham get some slight recompense for their woes from the sight of a German bomber lying on the green, across from the station. Crowds inspect it daily. They pay a small admission, which goes into the local Spitfire Fund.

Opposite the green there used to be a cosy little pub. Doris Hare, the English actress, drove in with me the morning after the pub was destroyed.

"It was such a nice pub," she kept saying. "And they had the best beer in Mitcham."

Sutton By-Pass. Here we leave the thirty-mile limit. Ordinarily, we can step on it. Now the By-Pass is closed because of a time-bomb. We make a wide detour to the left. We have been doing it for three weeks now. The AA man tells us that it may be another week before the bomb goes off. I wish they would do something about it. The detour is a mean one; moreover, they have now dropped one on the new route, so that for several days we have been compelled to make a detour off the detour.

Eventually, we get by the By-Pass and come to a white place in the highway. On either side of the road is a large crater. The ground here seems to consist of chalk. The explosions covered the highway with stone. The air was still thick with dust

when I came along, one night, a few minutes after the bombs had landed.

Kingswood. A nice common, here.

Hey, there's a plane. Let's take a look at it. Just off the road, on the right, are the remains of a German fighter. The plane wrapped itself around a tree. It might have been something once, but now it looks like a heap of tomato cans. The wreck is still smoking. There are a lot of people standing around, edging up to the wreckage and trying to pillage souvenirs. The guard warns them away, pointing out that there may be unexploded cartridges, or even bombs, in the remains. We inquire about the pilot. A woman says that he came down at Dorking, several miles away. One of the guards, an Australian, disagrees.

"I think he's still in there," he says, nodding gleefully toward the wreckage.

We climb back into the car, feeling a bit better about the war after seeing the crashed German. As we approach Reigate, Canadian soldiers are very much in evidence. There are a lot of them around here. Canadians, like Americans, find it hard to get used to English food. They don't have to worry here. Hamburger stands have begun to spring up. One, in the shape of a log cabin, advertises real apple pie.

Here are a couple of soldiers, trying to get a lift.

They are always interesting company, so let's pick them up and see what they have to say.

We ask them why they came to England.

"To get away from home," says one.

"To take a sock at the Heinies," says the other.

The boys haven't been able to do any socking yet and they are getting a bit restless. Mothers worry about their daughters and farmers complain about the theft of chickens and ducks. Some of the boys stole a pig one night and roasted it in a field. There was hell to pay about that.

A constable at Scotland Yard told me they have had a lot of trouble with the Canadians. A couple of them got to holding up shopkeepers with knives. The police, in checking up, found that some of the boys had quite good police records. One, until he joined up, had been serving a life sentence for murder. These boys are going to be awfully useful if Hitler tries to invade but, meanwhile, they have turned some sections of staid old England upside down.

"Is it true," we ask our young friends, "that the Canadians beat up German fliers?"

"Oh," says one, "some of the boys like to take a poke at 'em, but the officers are pretty strict."

These boys look about nineteen or twenty. They are sleeping with a couple of women down the road. One of the women is Lady Something-or-Other. The other is her daughter.



"We've got eight days' leave," the boys gloat, "and the women are taking us to Scotland."

What, we ask, does the old man think about such goings-on?

"Oh, he doesn't seem to mind. He sticks to his booze and leaves us alone."

Reigate. We come over the North Downs and drop rapidly into the city. This hill is a great place to watch dogfights. The town has one of the best shelters in England—a great tunnel, cut in solid rock. The people are trooping in for the night as we come by.

It is getting dark as we leave Reigate. We must slow down now, for the one tiny light which we are allowed to use is little more than a glow under the front of the car. We approach a tank trap, two great concrete posts. There is a red light on each post. There is not much clearance between the posts and now, in the darkness, the lights seem to be about three feet apart. We slow down and find that we can get through all right.

Near the tank trap is a cluster of eleven craters. These were made the night of the Croydon air battle, the first big air fight of the war. I was going down the road that night, with friends, and we had a beautiful view of the fight from the Sutton Bypass. The German planes fled down the highway ahead of us, shedding their bombs as they went. They dropped about eighty in all, one of which

fell smack in the center of our road. Five of this cluster are in the garden of a tiny cottage. The blast blew a few tiles off the roof, but did not do any other damage. The occupants have spread a tarpaulin over the roof and continue to occupy their little house.

We angle up to an intersection. It is too bad we are in a hurry. There is a delightful little inn down this lane on the left. It is called Ye Olde Six Bells, and it was built in 827. The proprietor, thinking that there might be some doubt about the age of the inn in relation to the Christian Era, has thoughtfully put A.D. at the bottom of his sign. This England!

Now we are on the main Brighton road. The traffic picks up. Army lorries plow by in long convoys, flanked by motorcycles. Dispatch riders roar through the dark, reckless young devils doing their best to kill themselves and everyone else on the road. Here once more we have that unfortunate commingling of military and civil life which takes the meaning out of the term "military objective."

Over toward Redhill, there is a burst of anti-aircraft fire. Searchlights shoot into the sky in giant tepees of light. Further south, we hear the staccato bark of some sort of a rapid-firing gun. We hear they have installed a "Chicago piano" in the vicinity of Balcombe. This must be it. There

is a viaduct there and the Germans are always after it.

The road is barred at Handcross. A sentry informs us there is a time-bomb ahead, and that we shall have to make another detour.

"What time did they drop it?" we ask.

"Oh, sometime during the night," the soldier replies.

"That's strange. We came by here this morning and we didn't see any time-bomb."

"Oh," says the soldier, "we didn't discover it until ten o'clock."

It is now utterly dark and the rain is coming down in streams. We have had to turn off our one headlight. We have only our sidelights now, and these have been painted over until they consist of little more than a couple of white discs. I have never driven on this road. It is narrow and winding and the trees almost meet overhead. I can get along without lights on the open road, because there is always enough reflection from the sky to show where the road goes. In the woods, however, it is almost impossible to drive.

We creep along, doing a good five miles an hour. We have no idea where we are going. All we know is that if we keep to the right we shall eventually get back to our road. We pass through a small village. There is not a sign of life, not a glimmer of light. This must be Cuckfield. Ger-

man planes pass overhead, going north, bound for Croydon and Tooting and Mitcham and Wandsworth and London. The people in country houses and in the villages go to bed calmly, swallowed up in the sheltering mantle of the night. We open the windows of the car so that we can watch for the sides of the road. I put my face against the windshield, and drive slowly on.

We come to another village. I hate to ask directions. It always seems to me to be a confession of defeat. I swallow my pride and hail two men who come by on bicycles.

"What town is this?"

"This is Burgess Hill, sir."

Burgess Hill. Home. In a few minutes now we shall stand before a blazing fire. We shall exchange information with those at home on the events of the day, have a whisky or two and sit down to a hot dinner. We usually make it down in an hour and a quarter. Tonight, we have been on the way two and a half hours. All that is forgotten now, as we grope for the invisible slit in the foliage through which we must pass to enter Broadhill. We find the slit and come warily up the drive.

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## *Chapter 15*

# COUNTRY LIFE

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COUNTRY life in England isn't what it used to be. The most graceful, most peaceful existence on earth has, like everything else in this little country, been touched by the war. The stately homes of England are still stately, but they are apt to be minus a wing, or to have half their windows blown out. Broadhill was no exception.

We had a lot of fun at Broadhill. We also had plenty of excitement. We were living in a Defense Area—eight miles from the coast—and we were on the Germans' main line to London. We got the planes going and coming. Most of them had bigger fish to fry than us, but a surprising number of them seemed to have business in our neighborhood.

We used to have as many as 200 or 300 over in the course of a night. We put chairs on the roof and sat out there nightly to watch the procession. They would come in off the sea, one after the other, and drone their way northward. One by one they would come back and slide off to the fields of Northern France. They went up heavy-laden and working hard. They came back light and fleet and obviously hurrying to get home.

The searchlights would pick them up as they reached the English coast. A dozen beams would shoot seaward in a great spear of light. The searchlights would bring each plane inland, where it would be picked up by another group and then passed on, from one group to another, all the way to London. Coming back the process would be reversed. Sometimes the searchlights would be carrying along a dozen planes at a time and there would be as many as twenty shafts of light working on each plane.

I said the planes would be "picked up" by the searchlights. Actually, very few planes were ever caught. Only twice, in perhaps 100 nights of watching, did we see a German plane held in the beams of an English light. It is a wonderful sight when it does happen. The planes move across the sky like tiny silver toys. Apparently, once caught, they have a devil of a time getting

out of the beams. The trouble is that the beams don't catch them often enough.

It seemed to us, and to other amateur strategists in the neighborhood, that the searchlights were merely lighting the way to London for the invaders. The military men must have come to the same conclusion, for the use of searchlights down our way was eventually discontinued.

It used to give us the creeps to hear those planes passing over, hour after hour throughout the night, especially after Edward observed at breakfast one morning:

"There were about 200 last night. I was thinking that, as each plane carries a ton of bombs, we must have a couple of hundred tons of bombs hauled over our heads every night. I just hope none of them fall out of the racks."

I don't know whether they fell out of the racks or whether they were released, but plenty of them came down in our neighborhood.

It wasn't so bad in the daytime. Bombers frequently came over but they were always engaged by English fighters and, somehow, a bomber fleeing from a Spitfire or a Hurricane seems to lose its sting. Occasionally fleets of fighters would clash overhead, and then we would have ringside seats at a battle. They would bank and whirl and dive; the sky would be filled with the roar of engines and the chatter of machine-guns; eventu-

ally there would be the whine of a crippled machine plummeting to earth, black smoke belching from its tail and perhaps a white puff of parachute drifting lazily to leeward.

One morning, while we were having breakfast, a bomber came low over the house. They fly low when they are being pursued, to keep fighters from getting underneath them. This fellow was being chased by four Spitfires. They were right on his tail and it looked like curtains for Jerry. Then a most amazing thing happened. Two of the English planes dove at the German so recklessly that they collided. They sailed apart and went crashing to earth. The German rear-gunner, meanwhile, got in a lucky burst and shot down another English plane. The two remaining planes—the bomber, pursued by the surviving Spitfire—disappeared over the Downs. We heard later that the German was brought down in the Channel.

We decided, early in the game, that Broadhill was far too conspicuous. The house had an enormous amount of whitework upon it; moreover, it is flanked by enormous greenhouses. Edward got a gang of men in and had everything painted green. That made the house much less conspicuous. Whereas it had formerly stood out, from its commanding position atop a hill, for at least ten miles, it was now visible for only five miles.

The next job was to build shelters. The house



is massively built and has an excellent basement. We selected two rooms, one with walls six feet thick, and shored them up with tree-trunks and two-by-fours. Both rooms were fitted up with accommodations for sleeping and cooking so that, in an emergency, we could live there indefinitely. We were expecting an attempted invasion any moment and we always had in the back of our minds the idea that we might find ourselves in the middle of a battlefield.

We got our first good taste of the war one Sunday afternoon when a bunch of German bombers dropped in for dinner—and brought their machine-guns along. Edward was sitting on the terrace when they arrived. I was in the house. Ruth was in the garden getting some flowers. I was turning on the one o'clock news when I heard something coming across the front lawn, and looked out just in time to see a bomber zoom over the treetops. The English pilots used to skylark around our place and I thought it was one of them having some fun. They are getting far too careless, I thought. Somebody ought to complain to the commandant. I was just reaching the proper stage of indignation when there was another roar and two or three more planes flashed by. My indignation evaporated, especially when one of the planes let go with a burst of machine-gun fire. I heard Edward yelling to Ruth to lie down in the

garden, and then all hell seemed to be coming across the Downs and heading for Broadhill.

Edward came running through the house.

"Germans," he yelled.

We dashed to the back door, followed by Lillian, the cook. We could hear planes coming over and firing their guns as we ran through the house. We came out of the door just in time to see an enormous grey-green bomber pop over a hedge and come roaring across the garden. We could see the pilot in his little cage in front, the rear gunner in his little cage in the rear. There was a large black cross about five feet high on the fuselage, and a swastika on the tail. Apparently we classified as a military objective, for the gunner gave us the works as he went by. The bullets came through the garden and up over the house like a thin stream of water played from a hose. It was an odd sound—not the steady rattle to which we had become accustomed, but a noise like the bursting of bunches of firecrackers. It also sounded a bit like the crackling of electricity. The bomber hurtled over the trees and went off across the fields.

We found Ruth in a clump of Michaelmas daisies, where she had dived when the first plane appeared. She was very white and very angry. Bullets had landed all around her. She said she heard the dull smack as they hit the ground. We later took one out of the roof and, in a maid's bed-

room upstairs, we found one lying on the floor in a little mound of plaster.

The surprising thing about the whole affair was the low altitude at which the planes were flying. They came up through the fields not more than fifty feet above the ground. Sometimes they went between trees; at other times they had to zoom to clear them. One plane cut the top off a pear tree in Burgess Hill, and another knocked a chimney-pot from a house. One of the villagers swears that he saw a bomber fly under some telephone wires.

The last plane to go over let fly with a bomb as he cleared the house. It landed in the next field. The planes also machine-gunned the village but, although it was Sunday afternoon and the streets were filled with people, no one was injured. One of the bombers was brought down three miles away but the rest, so far as we know, escaped.

After it got too cold to stay on the roof at night, we organized a lookout system. Edward broke out an office inter-communication set. We put one box on the roof and the other on the ground floor. A man who, with his wife and three children, was being sheltered in the house would stay on the roof. He gave us frequent reports over the inter-communication set and, whenever there was anything worth seeing, we would all dash up to the roof to have a look.

The Germans sometimes dropped flares, which

would light up the countryside for miles around. They also threw out a lot of incendiaries and they were not exactly sparing with high explosives. Our man on the roof, Claude, was always yelling down about something or other and, in the course of an evening, we would run up half a dozen times to see what was going on.

One night Claude ran down yelling, "Look out. Here they come." The lights went out just as he reached the ground floor. We stood stock still while four explosions split the night. While we were groping around for flashlights, the police called from the village to ask if we knew where the bombs had fallen. We went out to look around but could find nothing.

The gardeners came in, the first thing in the morning, to say that the bombs were down the road. We immediately went down to see them. The first bomb landed in a field; the second fell on the edge of the road, knocking down the electric light pole and cutting off our electricity; the third and fourth landed alongside the house of our neighbors, the Baxters.

The bombs must have been of the type which explode upon impact, as they made very small craters and threw out hundreds of splinters. The splinters had peppered everything in sight. Several of them went through a nearby oil tank and then through a brick wall into the tool shed. A

cast-iron pipe was perforated. Two went through an iron girder in the garage. The girder was a quarter of an inch thick. Another piece went through one of the cars.

The Baxters were in their living room when the bombs arrived. They heard them coming and made a dive for the basement. It was fortunate they did, as shrapnel came through the windows and plastered the living room. One piece went through the back of the chair in which Mrs. Baxter had been sitting.

This was a sample of life around Broadhill. There was hardly a night when bombs did not fall somewhere in the vicinity. We would lie in bed and listen to the planes coming over. When they didn't go over, we knew we were going to see some fun. They would begin to circle around, coming lower and lower and cutting ever smaller circles. Eventually there would come the whistle of a bomb, followed by a dull explosion, then another whistle, then another explosion, and so on. The windows would rattle, if closed, and, if they were not closed, the curtains would jump inward and then outward as though agitated by the breath of some overweening giant. Which, I suppose, they were. In the shelter we would hear the bombs only faintly, but we could tell how near they were by the trembling of the earth.

The house was only damaged once, and then

slightly. A German plane coming from the southwest let go with a string of four. It was about eleven o'clock at night. The bombs came rushing at the old house seemingly with the speed of lightning, each one louder than the one before. The first one shook the windows; the second one shook the doors; the third one shook the house; the fourth one shook everything. We waited for the usual fifth and sixth bombs of the stick, but they didn't come. There was a crash of glass from the conservatory and from one of the cottages. We hurried out to investigate.

The first thing we discovered was that the front door would not open. It is a massive door, perhaps three inches thick, and it is fitted with a very substantial lock. The door had been sucked outward with sufficient force to bend the bolt and thus jam the lock.

A total of seventeen windows had been broken in the conservatory. Most of the windows, like the door, were sucked outward and not blown inward. Two windows had also been taken out of a cottage by a blast of air which went in one side of the house and came out the other. The outgoing blast had taken the frame along with the glass. Swinging windows at the lodge had been neatly opened, as had a door.

In the morning we went down to see the craters, the nearest of which was about 300 yards from

the house. A cottage lying between us and the crater was not injured; the blast apparently had gone over the roof and then shot up the slope to Broadhill. A few days later one of the gardeners, while cutting grass on the tennis court, nearly ruined his mower on a piece of bomb splinter.

Some time later the Germans dropped another string, almost in the same place. These bombs, like the others, fell in a direct line with Broadhill; this time, however, they were going away from us and not coming toward us. They made enormous craters. The holes were fifty feet across and perhaps thirty feet deep. Clay was thrown in all directions, pieces as large as a horse being thrown about like pebbles.

One of the bombs fell twenty feet from a chickenhouse. Not a pane of glass was broken in the chickenhouse, and the chickens were hardly disturbed. Beyond the chickenhouse, meanwhile, windows were broken a quarter of a mile away.

Another bomb landed in a hedge, beside three great oaks. One of the oaks was mangled. Gardener Brockway, Sussex through and through, refused to be perturbed.

"Don't you worry," he said. "Them trees've been standin' there for 300 years. It'll take more'n bombs to kill 'em."

It did not take us long, at Broadhill, to decide that the Germans were after something in the

vicinity. What could it be? We couldn't imagine any reason why they should be interested in our house. Yet they were obviously trying to get something there. We thought for a time that they might suspect the house of being some sort of a military headquarters, as it was in an excellent location and boasted, in addition, a high tower. We also wondered whether a television aerial on the house might not make it look a bit suspicious. We took the aerial down but that didn't seem to make any difference to the Germans.

The favorite theory in the neighborhood, and the most likely explanation, was that we were too close to the Southern Railway. The main line from London split into two sections above our house. We were located right in the V, just about half way between the two tracks. The chances are that the Germans were trying to hit the intersection and, with their usual accuracy, were sprinkling bombs over a sizeable area about their objective.

The villagers had several other explanations. One was that a nearby hotel had been taken over by the government. Certainly this hotel got plenty of attention. More than 100 bombs were dropped around it. It had incendiaries on the golf course and a time-bomb alongside the tennis court. Guests kept away from the tennis court for days, until the time-bomb went off. "Now for a good game of tennis," said a couple of spinsters, going



for their rackets. When they reached the court, they discovered that the time-bomb was still there. The explosion had been caused by another one which landed in a hedge and had not been discovered.

Another theory about the bombing in our neighborhood was that the Germans were after a field west of the house. This field was once used by Sir Alan Cobham and a flying circus. It is shown on British air maps as an emergency landing field. The Germans possibly assume that it is now being used.

Those of us who are familiar with this field can testify that it is suitable for emergency landings. A Hurricane pilot used it one evening when he ran short of petrol. Tree trunks had been set up in the field to prevent the Germans from using it for landing troops. The Hurricane pilot circled around until he had exhausted the remainder of his petrol and then, apparently to make sure that he didn't collide with any of the tree trunks, landed his machine on its belly. The pilot was uninjured and the damage to the plane was slight.

Still another theory which went around the village was that the Germans were after somebody. Some people thought that they might be after the family of a girl who had gone to Germany to work for the Nazis. Others thought that the raids might have something to do with the German wife

of one of the villagers. The girl's family lived near us. Maybe, the gossip went, she had had a falling out with the Nazis and they were trying to kill her parents. The German wife, it was said, was once heard to praise Hitler. Perhaps she was giving signals to guide the German bombers. Who could know?

So the summer passed ; and the fall. The owners of Broadhill went to America. I returned to London. The Blitzkrieg went belching and vomiting into the second winter of war.

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## *Chapter 16*

### THE 8:32 TO VICTORIA

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TIME was when one could take the 8:32 from Haywards Heath and reach Victoria forty-nine minutes later. Those days are gone. Nevertheless, the British have done a good job of keeping the trains running, even though the schedules may be a bit cock-eyed, the compartments a bit crowded and the service somewhat less than perfect.

During the first few weeks of the Blitz, the Germans managed to get over quite regularly during the morning rush hour. That was bad for commuters. My fast little train from Haywards Heath, which would normally scoot along at fifty or sixty miles an hour, had to reduce speed to fifteen miles an hour. Passengers didn't like that very well, but the railway officials were adamant

The big danger to trains, they pointed out, is not so much bombs as the wrecks which may be caused by bombs. A bomb, even a direct hit, would not kill many people. A wreck at fifty miles an hour would be much more serious.

There is also the danger of plowing into a crater in the right of way. I suppose the best place to drop a bomb, from the standpoint of an airman, is just ahead of the locomotive. A locomotive on the London-Southampton run did go into a crater once. Fortunately, the driver had slowed down at the beginning of the raid.

Sometimes we had to come into town on the installment plan. We would take the train from point A to point B, where there might be a viaduct under review, or perhaps a time-bomb by the tracks. We would all pile into buses for transportation to the next station. There we would get on another train and continue our journey. Commuting in those days took a lot of time but it was never dull. It usually went about like this:

There is a queue at the stationmaster's window at Haywards Heath. The train will leave in a couple of minutes and late comers are all trying to get their tickets at once. The soldiers seem to have special difficulty. Awkward fellows in their battle dress, red-faced from unaccustomed exposure to sun and wind, they fumble their money and struggle heroically with rifles, gas masks, tin helmets,

packsacks, and the other impedimenta with which they seem perpetually to be burdened. Most of them, also, give way, with what seems to me a shockingly inappropriate diffidence, to civilians. They apparently give way to the women out of courtesy, produced by being in uniform, if not innate; they give way to the men, mostly prosperous bourgeois, because an Englishman always knows his place, and it takes more than a war to break down the traditions of the past. So, men and women get their tickets hurriedly and race for the No. 3 platform, leaving the soldiers to get along as best they can in the complicated business of exchanging money for a piece of pasteboard, having the pasteboard punched, finding the proper platform and then getting into a seat, their two arms full of equipment.

The train is crowded, as is usual these days. Those who have seats are slow, as usual, about moving over to make room for newcomers. Women are better at getting themselves into a compartment than men. They push the wedges of their behinds into the smallest openings and gradually work their way into a position, if not of comfort, at least of stability. The soldiers, still deferential, mostly take up positions in the corridors, where they lurch about, and joke, and fight with their equipment.

We start off at a good clip, since the night raids

have ceased and it is not quite time for the day raids to begin. The fields are wet and lovely. The day is more like September than October. We fairly fly along, in order to make as many miles as possible before Hitler's young men start their day's activities.

We have not gone far when we come to a huge crater alongside the track. It is about fifty feet from a viaduct. People smile. "Hitler will have to do better than that to stop our trains."

We are near Balcombe. One hit there, and the Southern Railway will be out of commission for a long time to come. A little further on, we come to another crater. The tracks are covered with red mud; that is all. The field behind is dotted with circular black patches about six feet in diameter. There are thirty or forty of them, each the remnant of an incendiary. The Germans are dropping a lot of Molotov breadbaskets these days. This particular breadbasket has distributed its load harmlessly in a green field.

Another field with a crater. This bomb landed dead on a small stream. The explosion made a beautiful hole forty or fifty feet across which, filling with water, became a pond. The pond is self-contained. Ducks are swimming in it as we go by.

We stop at a station. On the platform is a poster advertising an American movie: "To hell with Hitler! Get out and enjoy a good laugh. See Bob

Hope in 'The Ghost Breakers.' " That's the spirit, Britain. In Mitcham, the other day, I saw this sign over what had once been a shop: "Hitler has got us up, he has got us out, but he has not got us down."

The platform is filled with people trying to get to London. A few are able to get on our train. The rest wait patiently. "I came to catch the 9:05. It hasn't shown up yet. It looks as though I shall have to take the 10:05."

How stable, these people; how patient. The sins of the British Empire are many. It is so easy to forget all that when you are sliding through the lush fields of Surrey. It is hard to imagine that this little country has lived by war; it is harder still to imagine that war ever could come to these gentle fields. But war has come to these very fields. The craters tell us that. And we see many other evidences in the course of our trip to town.

Here, where yesterday there was a tiny lake, to-day we find a mud flat. The lakes of England are being drained to prevent German pilots from using them as guides. To confuse the enemy still further, new lakes are being created.

Streams have been deepened to stop tanks. To prevent amphibious tanks from clambering up the far bank, miles and miles of stockade have been constructed. Some of these barriers cut half way across the country. Where there is no stream,

great ditches have been dug, and everywhere there have been planted lines of concrete blocks of every conceivable size and shape.

In the wood lots and along the roads you will find men at work chopping down trees. England needs wood. England also needs clear views for her gunners. There is more timber on this little island than one would imagine. Several thousand lumberjacks have been brought over from Newfoundland and British Columbia to cut down trees.

We are coming to a little stream. If you will look sharply you will see, over by that bridge, a couple of large girders. Those have been placed there for use in case the Germans drop something on the bridge. Girders have been laid out like that all over England. In some cases, extra bridges have already been constructed. They are built in standardized sections and stored at strategic locations. Where a bridge is of special importance, a duplicate structure may already be in place. I saw one in a town west of London, where a new bridge has been put up about 100 feet from the old one, just in case. New approaches have been constructed for one or two of the London bridges. I understand that central spans are all ready and that, if a bridge is destroyed, they can be brought down the river on barges and bolted into position in a matter of days.



We make excellent time to East Croydon. We are congratulating ourselves upon an early start at work, when the sirens begin to wail. A warden comes through the train. He puts his head into each compartment, saying calmly,

"The Alert has sounded. Please pull down the shades."

The train is plastered with stickers telling you what to do in case of an air raid. The main thing is to pull down the shades, to minimize the danger of flying glass. After that, you are supposed to lie on the floor—if there is room. There is never any room. I don't think you could get an Englishman to lie down in public, anyway. I have never seen anyone lie down in the streets, no matter how near the bombs were falling.

There are six people in our compartment, in addition to us. There is a little old lady. There is a middle-aged man, well-dressed, with a blue armband bearing the words "Civil Defense." There are a couple of girls (obviously office workers), a young man who looks like a clerk, and a soldier. Does the presence of the soldier in our compartment make us all military objectives? Do the soldiers in the corridor make the whole train a military objective? One wonders.

We hear planes. We have no idea whether they are ours or theirs. I suppose we soon shall know. If they drop something, or if they come down to

machine-gun the train, as they sometimes do, they will be theirs.

Nobody pays much attention to the planes. The man with the blue armband puts down his paper and tries to peek through a slit in the curtain, but the rest of us go on with whatever we were doing when the siren went. The girls chatter like a couple of nervous birds; the clerk struggles with a crossword puzzle; the soldier leans uncomfortably on his rifle; the little old lady sits back calmly, with her hands folded over a bulky suitcase which she is holding on her lap.

The little old lady seems to be having difficulties with the suitcase, so we ask if we may put it in the rack for her.

"Oh no," she says brightly. "It's empty." Then, after a moment, she adds, "I am going to see if I can't pick up a couple of things from my house." Another pause. "It was bombed the other night."

The woman must be about seventy. She is dressed a bit incongruously in a brown coat and a black hat. We ask her about the bombing.

"Well," she says, "it was about midnight. My husband and I went into the cellar with our daughter. We have beds fixed there and when Hitler is being nasty we sleep in the cellar. We were lying there, listening to the noise of the anti-aircraft guns and to the sound of the bombs when, all of a sudden, two fell on us. One landed in the garden;

it tore off the back of the house. The other went right through the middle of the house. Fortunately, it did not come into the cellar, which was under one corner. It came through the main part of the house and exploded in the earth. It came so quickly that we hardly had time to know what was happening. We heard two terrible explosions and a splintering sound like dozens of boards being torn to pieces. Then the lights went out and things began to fall on top of us.

"There were seven of us in the cellar altogether. I started to get up when the explosions came, but I was caught on my hands and knees. Boards fell around me so that I could not move from this position. Everyone else was also trapped. We did not dare move for fear of bringing down more stuff on top of us. It was two hours before they dug us out.

"Those ARP men were wonderful. They dug a hole down from the garden to a place where there was a boardedup window. They then came through the window and took us out one by one. Fortunately there was no fire. The gas main was broken and we got a little sick from that. The water main also got broken; the water was about six inches deep by the time the men got through to us. The men wrapped us in blankets as they pulled us out, and took us into nearby houses."

We ask the old lady if they saved anything.

"Only our night clothes," she says simply. "In the morning we went to the homes of friends and they gave us something to wear. Then we went back to our house to see what we could find. Our little home was just a pile of bricks and sticks and broken glass."

Tears come to her eyes. Then she brightens.

"A funny thing happened. On the front lawn I found one of my shoes. Now, I thought, if I can only find one to go with it, even if it is not the mate, I will be all right. What do you think happened? Lying on the other side of the lawn was the mate. At least I had a pair of shoes.

"Luckily we had a little money. I had my handbag, containing some money, my ration card, my identity card and other things, lying alongside of me in the cellar. I hung on to that and saved it. My daughter lost her purse, however. It was near her but she did not dare move for fear of bringing down more débris.

"Another funny thing happened. We kept our china in a built-in cupboard between the kitchen and dining room. Somehow, that cupboard escaped destruction, and not a single piece of china was broken. There wasn't even a handle off any of the cups.

"My daughter also saved a drawerful of underclothes, and I hope to get a few things of mine when we dig the furniture out. My furniture was

quite substantial and I think some of the dressers will be all right. The ARP men are digging around the place now and maybe they will have a few things set aside when I get there."

The old lady's house was at a place called St. Martin's, which is near Richmond. We ask her if there are any military objectives nearby. "Oh no," she says, "not that I know of. Hitler is just trying to scare us. It's disgusting."

We ask her if the English will ever surrender to the Nazis.

"Never," she said, firmly. "It will take more than bombs to beat us. England will never make peace with people who do that."

I don't believe they will. They'll never quit.

There is the thud of a bomb while we are talking. The little old lady sits calmly. She says nothing as we peek through the shades and conjecture about where the bomb landed. There is a twinkle in her eye and her hands lie limp on the suitcase. She has had a bomb in her house; she can't be bothered about one 500 yards down the track. She rides serenely through to the end of the line.

Now we are barely creeping along. Whereas we have come from Haywards Heath to Croydon—two-thirds of our journey—in half an hour, it will take us another hour to get into London.

The suburbs to the south of London have been taking a terrible beating. Houses have been hit all

along the tracks from East Croydon to the Thames. Many are gone completely; others have holes blown in the walls, and scores are without roofs. Blast seems to have a nasty habit of getting under the tiles and blowing them off like playing cards thrown into an electric fan.

At Balham, there is a truly enormous crater in the street near the tracks. In the crater we can just see the back of a double-deck bus. The end of the bus is below the level of the street. We hope the bus was empty when the crash came.

The Balham hit apparently was a major catastrophe. The bomb burst a conduit carrying an underground river, the Walde. Water poured into the Balham tube station, trapping 200 or 300 people who were sheltering there. A girl who escaped says that most of them were swept away in the torrent which raced down the tube. I have heard that 150 bodies were recovered and that others are believed to have been sealed in the tube when the flood gates were closed.

Our track is flanked on either side by rows of muddy mounds. These are the tin shelters, bearing the name of Sir John Anderson, formerly Home Secretary, which were supplied by hundreds of thousands to people in vulnerable areas. Millions of people sleep nightly in these burrows, although they are cold and clammy and it is a constant battle to keep them free of water.

Beyond Balham, a tousled female crawls out of one. She looks as though she has spent the night in a hole in the ground. She has. She sucks in warmth from one of the excellent cigarettes which even the poor smoke in England, and looks up beligerently at the day. These people seem to be able to stand any discomfort. If Hitler's intention is to demoralize the civilian population, he has not succeeded thus far. If he cannot scare people who spend their nights in a hole in the ground, alongside the railroad tracks, he cannot scare anyone.

Some of the shelters are mere mud piles; others have been substantially and attractively covered with sod and stones. Children play around many of them. On one, a small white dog is sleeping.

Victory gardens bloom in every yard. One householder has carried his garden over the air raid shelter, which is now a mass of luxuriant cabbages. Chicken coops are common. With eggs at seventy-five cents a dozen, everybody is trying to keep a hen or two.

Near Clapham, the tracks are covered with débris from a nearby hit. The bricks have been hastily shoved aside, and we pass through without difficulty. A few hundred yards further on, we come to a direct hit, the only one we have seen in this forty-mile journey. The bomb has landed smack in the center of a broad network of tracks. Workmen swarm around the hole like ants. Tons

of rock are being thrown into the hole, and the twisted tracks are being disconnected to make room for new steel. In forty-eight hours trains will be running there as before. Meanwhile, since there are at least a dozen tracks side by side, traffic has not been interrupted.

A military man once told me that the great Battersea Power Station would be regarded by the Germans as Military Objective No. 1. Bombs have been dropped all around it, but so far the station seems not to have been damaged. I always feel a little jittery in passing this place, especially since the power station is flanked by three enormous gas tanks. A man told me the other day that his train was stalled for twenty minutes between the gas tanks and the power station, during an air raid. Several bombs fell nearby. He would not admit that he was scared, but he was a trifle uneasy.

We creep by the spot and go slowly onto Victoria Bridge. This bridge has been hit twice. One bomb went through it and exploded harmlessly in the river. Another caused slight damage to one edge. It is inspected frequently now to make sure that it is all right.

Victoria Station. Trains debouching people on all sides. A huge placard informing us that we may use the station shelter at our own risk. Glass on the platform and between the tracks. Half of the windows missing overhead.



Victoria had its baptism of fire before the war, when the IRA left a bomb in the checkroom. That was big news, a cruel and brutal event. Several innocent people were killed and injured. The contents of the checkroom were blown onto the platform. Windows were blown out of trains, and the station's huge clock was broken. It seemed a ghastly thing. Now Victoria is full of glass. There is a crater outside, in front of the News Theatre, where a shelter had been. The pub across the way is boarded up. They are bracing a bank with timbers to keep it from falling into the street. On a recent Sunday afternoon, half a German airplane fell in the station courtyard. Nobody stands aghast now. Bombs are all part of the day's work.

There must be 2,000 or 3,000 panes out of the great glass roof of Victoria. As we wade through the glass to reach our exit we pass a sign hastily scribbled on a blackboard. It says:

"Train services as usual—except South London, which is temporarily suspended."

We pass quickly into the street and hurry off to work.

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## *Chapter 17*

# MURDER IN THE BLACK-OUT

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THE city lies before us, black and silent. We are on one of the tallest structures in London, a luxury flat building in Berkeley Square. We have come to the roof to see what is going on. There is plenty going on. It is going to be one of the worst nights of the Blitzkrieg. Let's stay up here and see what happens.

The town is dark except for one bright light to the north. What can it be? Some careless householder? A Fifth Columnist? A German incendiary? It may be a railway signal; for some reason railway men still live in a world of light.

Each building is a black box. Let the faintest glow show through a thin curtain, and a warden will be at the front door. Every home in England

has been sealed now. Poor, pathetic little houses. It is so easy to shut in the light, and so difficult to shut out bombs.

The streets are only slightly less black than the buildings. It is hard to tell just where they are. The street lights have been reduced to tiny pin-points. They call it star lighting. The lights themselves are invisible from above, as they are hidden under shades. All we see are tiny pools on the pavement. They don't look like light; they look, instead, like little patches of vapor, ghostly and unreal.

The traffic lights have been painted over except for small crosses. They have also been covered with tin shields. We can't see the lights from our position but around each shield floats a misty aura, now green, now yellow, now red. The aura is so faint that it is difficult to distinguish the changes. The colors seem, in fact, not to change but rather to blend one into the other.

Down Berkeley Street, toward the Ritz, is a faintly illuminated sign containing a white S painted on a black background. There are thousands of these signs in the streets of London. Each one marks a shelter. If you will look closely you will see, just beyond the sign, a dim blue light. That marks the entrance. If you get caught in the street, and hear something coming down, just run

for one of those blue lights. The shelter may not be much, but it is better than nothing.

There is hardly a sound. Occasionally there comes up to us the sound of footsteps. Someone hurrying home, dodging from one doorway to the next, watching, listening, looking for cover. It is strange what a feeling of security one gets from the flimsiest shelter. We know that bombs plow through the stoutest buildings, explode in the basement and bring the whole place down in ruins. Still we feel safe indoors. The people of London eventually are going to get so used to bombs that they will stroll in the street and let them fall where they may. Tonight they still move furtively as they make their way through the darkness below.

A late taxi scuttles through the gloom. Some poor driver risking his neck to pick up an odd shilling. Far off in the distance, over Regent's Park way, a locomotive pants. Not far from Wally Simpson's old place. Wally is lucky she didn't get to be Queen of England.

Let's walk about the roof and stretch our legs. When the Germans come, we'll have to take shelter in that little building over there, which contains the machinery for the elevators. It isn't too substantial but it will stop splinters, anyway.

We are standing just about in the center of London. The city stretches for miles in every direc-

tion, a vast conglomeration of brick and stone and steel and wood. Land and water. Streets and parks. Stately squares. Dingy mews. Factories. Shops. Theatres. Churches and hospitals. Dives. Public houses. Above all, the homes of people. Mansions, hovels, the grimy fronts of respectable middle-class dwellings. The greatest concentration of life to be found on this earth. Eight million human beings. Old people. Young people. Babies born and babies about to be born. Rich people. Poor people. Happy ones and those not happy. Black men and white men and yellow men. And their women. And always the children, the little ones denied even the privilege of knowing why they must die.

We look out over the blackness, nearly 700 square miles of the works of man. Here and there throughout this vast agglomeration there are points which, by the accepted rules of warfare, must be regarded as military objectives. What are they? Where are they? There is one, a government department, 300 feet from where we stand. We know it is there, because we have seen it by daylight. Now it is absolutely invisible. There are military objectives in London, as in every city, but for every objective of this sort there are homes, shops, churches, hospitals and schools in the ratio of 100 to one. No pilot could possibly pick a target out of this black expanse. No pilot, flying at

20,000 feet, could hit his target even if he knew where it was.

The experience of this particular neighborhood is typical of the experience of Britain as a whole. This building, Lansdowne House, has been hit several times. A shop was wrecked and two flats were burned out by an oil bomb. Several incendiaries have landed in the court. Practically every window was blown out of the front of the building by a bomb which landed in the Square. Poor Harley Moseley has had a terrible time trying to keep windows in his flats.

Over in Curzon Street there is a bad one. Hill Street is up in two places. The Farm Street Catholic Church has no roof on it. Half Moon Street has been cut in two (one might say that it has been converted into quarters). Directly opposite us, in Dover Street, there is a building missing. Bruton Street has had two terrific hits. Bruton Mews is a shambles and the Florida Club, popular with Americans, has ceased to exist. Bond Street, Carlos Place, Mount Street, Green Park, Piccadilly—all have felt the weight of German bombardment. Directly opposite us, at the head of the square, there used to be a beautiful old house. There remains only the steel framework of an elevator shaft. There must be twenty or thirty bomb holes within five blocks of our rooftop.

Only two of the places hit could, by any stretch of imagination, be considered military objectives.

The city sleeps. It seems to sleep. Actually, down there in the darkness, beneath that canopy of black velvet, millions of human beings go about the business of living. It is the time of night when mothers are putting their children to bed. Men are with their women and women are with their men. Workers exult over an extra two hours of overtime, and shopkeepers worry about dwindling revenues. In the government offices, civil servants slave through the night. In the night clubs, young people eat and dance and get tight and make flip remarks about the illusions of life. Good deeds are done, and bad. What matter; it is all the same to a bomb.

Some people huddle in shelters and some wait calmly in their own rooms. Death is a bit late tonight, but do not worry; he will be here soon. Death will reach through that blanket and pluck them out with cold impartiality. Old and young, rich and poor, good and bad. We can only wait and cherish the ignoble hope that the guts which fly into the street will belong to somebody else. Before dawn some of us will have been blasted into eternity. We will lose legs and arms and chunks out of our faces. They will pick us up in garbage pails. We shall never see again. Oh God, don't do it to me; do it to somebody else.

Silence. Dead silence. Then, faintly, from the southeast, comes a low hum, like the sound of a small electric motor. It could be mother's vacuum cleaner. It could be, but it isn't. It is one of the brave young men of Goering's Luftwaffe, come with his fellows to strafe the hated English—the stupid, superior English who do everything wrong and yet seem, somehow, to endure. The nightly parade is on. From now until dawn, these boys who should be in high school will hover over the exposed heart of an empire. They used to come over in masses. For some reason, they don't do that any more. Now they come one at a time.

This fellow coming in from the southeast is the first of an armada of planes which will pass over the city, discharge their cargoes and wheel homewards between now and daybreak. These first boys are typical of the others. They will roar through the night sky, high above the silent city. The river will give them a vague idea of where they are, but they would have to be diviners even to attempt to aim the deadly missiles slung in their plane. Eventually, the bomb-aimer will press a button and 500 pounds of death and destruction will hurtle into the void below. Perhaps the young man will change his mind at the last moment. He may pause to cough, to scratch himself, to take another look. He may even get a certain whimsical satisfaction out of playing with the button, saving



the life of a stevedore in Stepney and bestowing death instead on a family of five in Fulham. I wonder what a bomb-aimer thinks about.

It appears that these planes come over on a beam. A German officer draws a line from Hamburg to Berkeley Square. He draws another line from Stuttgart to Berkeley Square. The pilot rides the beam from Hamburg. When he hits the beam from Stuttgart, he lets go. His bombs should land in Berkeley Square. That is the theory. In practice, they land all over the West End.

The Germans are supposed to have this beam narrowed down to 300 yards. It is rumored that they also have perfected a device which releases the bombs automatically the moment the plane crosses the second beam. That sounds like a good idea. It would take care of any unruly crews who might let false notions of humanity interfere with their work. It should also ease the consciences of those who, while they may not like the dirty business of killing babies, believe that the first duty of a good soldier is to obey orders. After all, the men don't do anything. They just fly away from Hamburg. If an electrical impulse releases some bombs from their plane, there isn't much they can do about it.

The plane comes nearer. The hum turns into a drone. The drone becomes a whine. It is an angry whine, reminiscent of a buzz saw and reminiscent,

also, of a swarm of bees. Searchlights stab the black bowl of the night. They fix on a point to the southeast and move slowly toward us. We have heard a lot of talk about night fighters. Where are they now? It is easy to see how Hitler was able to panic the people of France. It is the feeling of helplessness that hurts more than the actual danger, this inability to do anything either to protect oneself or to fight back. The British have not panicked, but it would be idle to pretend they can go on forever taking this punishment without developing a sense of frustration more dangerous than fear.

The plane is nearly overhead. We have been told that you don't hear the bomb which hits you. At 20,000 feet, an airman must drop his load so many miles short of his objective. If this fellow unloads now, his bombs will clear Marble Arch and land in the vicinity of Paddington. True enough. The catch in it is that this fellow may have dropped a couple when he came across the river, and that bombs and plane will arrive together.

That is the way it happens, so don't be surprised if you hear the scream of a bomb just as the plane passes over. A bomb falls at the rate of about 700 miles an hour—which means that it takes about thirty seconds to come down from 20,000 feet. A bomb also continues to travel forward at almost

the speed of the machine. That means that a bomb dropped from this plane, half a minute ago, would be arriving just about now.

To the left, in the vicinity of Hyde Park, a great red flash melts the night. It looks like the heat lightning you get on a sultry evening in America. It also reminds you of the sudden, sullen glow given off at pouring time in a blast furnace.

Several guns apparently have been fired together. The shells explode overhead in vivid pinpoints of light. We get the sound of the firing twice—once when the guns are fired, and again when the shells explode. The guns roar and rumble and crack. The shells explode with an odd sound. They take me back thirty years, for each one lets go with the sort of noise you get in beating a rug. It is even more like the snap of washing in a strong wind. It might also be compared to the crack of a whip, except that it is not so sharp; there is more of a swish to it.

Flashes appear from all directions now. The noises of the guns and of the exploding shells intermingle in a hideous cacophony which thrills even as it hurts. The sound seems to by-pass the eardrums and to hammer directly on the brain. It hurts, but how thrilling it is to be fighting back. This great sprawling target is not altogether helpless. We can at least throw little tubes of metal into the air and make them explode in the vicinity

of our enemies. We may not get very many of them, but we at least have the pleasure of trying.

At this point the Germans are our enemies, for all considerations of nationality and neutrality vanish when a pilot is circling over you with a load of bombs.

"Look out for splinters!"

Every shell which explodes throws off a shower of jagged splinters. These pieces, falling from a great height, can pierce the skull with less neatness but with even greater effectiveness than a bullet. They have been picked up in handfuls from this very roof. We hear them fall now. They land in the street with a metallic *psing* not unlike the sound of a ricochetting bullet. In Berkeley Square they cut through the trees with a faint watery swish. One lands on the roof—*psing*—and we rush around in the dark to find it while it is still hot.

Maybe we'll get a noscap. They make such nice paperweights. We shan't miss it if one comes down here, for they land with a loud plunk. There is a shallow disk in the back of each shell. They are about the size of a silver dollar and they come down with a warbling noise reminiscent of a beginner practising on the flute. Listen carefully and you may hear one. It is the only musical sound connected with this gory business of bombing.

The plane drones on. Suddenly, from the direc-

tion of Regent's Park, there is a volcano of light, followed by a clap of thunder. That must be one of the new naval guns in action, a 6-incher, nothing less. The shell goes hurtling through the air with a noise like that of an express train. You almost imagine you can hear the turning of wheels. It rushes at you with incredible speed and yet with incredible slowness, too. It probably is only a second or two, but it seems like minutes before the shell explodes. The first explosion is followed by another and another. Ah, this is what we have been waiting for.

The other guns, meanwhile, have intensified their fire. Somewhere, seemingly from behind us, down toward the river, there is a new note, the quick bark of a rapid-firing gun. It is probably one of those Swedish Bofors. Little flashes of light dance all over the area where we imagine the plane to be. Some of the flashes explode sideways and dart about like jagged streaks of lightning. Now we are giving Jerry something to think about. We have stopped worrying about those bombs. We are after him now and, even though his bombs will eventually come down to finish their dirty work, we exult in the thrill of the chase.

Jerry decides it is getting too hot and swings to the left. He heads southwest through what appears to be the weakest point in the barrage. Then, *wheeeeeee . . .* and we know he has started

to unload. No matter how many times you have heard it, the sound is still bloodcurdling. Each one comes in turn as a new shock. It seems that the release of such a missile should be accompanied by some preliminary sound, just as the flight of a shell is preceded by the firing of the gun. There is no preliminary sound, just this unearthly rush of air, half wail, half whistle, which swells into a crescendo and then finishes in a single shattering detonation.

It is hard to believe that these bombs are only falling. They come with such incredible speed that it seems they must be projected from the muzzle of some diabolical gun mounted high in the heavens. But there is no gun. That boy who presses a button merely releases his load. Chance, gravity, wind, friction, and the rotation of the earth do the rest. The boy may reason that he only lets go of his bombs; after that, they are in the hands of God Almighty.

*Wheeeeeee . . . . . bomp! Wheeeeeee . . . . .  
bomp! Wheeeeeee . . . . . bomp! Wheeeeeee . . . . .  
bomp! Wheeeeeee . . . . . bomp! Wheeeeeee . . . . .  
bomp!*

"That would be Kensington," someone said quietly.

Now that the parade is on, they will come quickly. Most of them will come in from the southeast. Some, however, will veer over to the

east and some will come up from the south. A few will go all the way around London and shoot in from the west and the north. I don't know why they do this, unless it is to confuse the gunners and to look for weak spots in the defense. Sometimes they come along at the rate of one a minute. There will not be a period of more than fifteen minutes between now and morning when one of these infernal machines will not be sowing death from the sky.

*Whewwwww . . . . .* here comes a close one. It lands in Albemarle Street, two blocks away. There are two flashes—one from the bomb, one from the resultant fire. The fire blazes up quickly and furiously. They must have got a gas main. They have. The street is a mass of flames. These gas fires are nasty. You can't put them out with water and it takes a long time to find the proper main and get the gas turned off.

*Whewwwww . . . . .* here comes another. This one goes over and lands in Piccadilly. It also lands in the street, and it also fractures a gas main. The Germans are having good luck tonight. This bomb explodes with a terrific detonation; at least it is terrific to us, for it lands in such a way that intervening buildings do not soak up the shock. Our building shudders; the roof seems to be swaying. Simultaneously with the explosion, two brilliant squares of light appear in the side of a building

adjoining the fire. The blast apparently took out a couple of windows in the Splendide Hotel. The openings look like great square searchlights. For Christ's sake, somebody, get those lights out!

We are between two fires, literally and figuratively. The Germans will be along regularly now. They love a good fire. It makes their work so much easier. All they have to do is point the noses of their planes toward the fire, wait until the flames come into the bomb-sight and then let go. And that they do, throughout the night.

The bombs are coming rapidly now. They are falling all round us, sometimes singly, sometimes in salvos of five or six. One lands in a garage behind the Park Lane Hotel. Another crashes into a pub. Two come down a couple of blocks to the north of us, and three more land along Oxford Street. A building across from Selfridge's vanishes, and a women's wear store nearby is brutally bisected by a brace of big ones. Have they hit any military objectives? Not quite. One bomb just missed an electrical sub-station in a street that must be nameless.

*Wheeeeeee . . . . . wheeeeeee . . . . . wheeeeeee*  
*. . . . . wheeeeeee . . . . . wheeeeeee . . . . . wheeeeeee*  
*. . . . .* Six more, this time to the east. One in the Carlton Club, one in the Carlton Hotel, one in a furniture store off Trafalgar Square. We count



forty-two before we decide, at 3:30, that we had better go down and get some sleep.

Look! The sky to the east suddenly turns a ghastly white as three flares float down. These must be the brightest things on earth. The A.A. boys go after them with machine-guns. Red tracer bullets lick the edges of each flare and soon two of them are shot to bits. The third settles imperceptibly to earth. We watch anxiously to see if it is going to land on a roof. It apparently doesn't and, in a few moments, the glare is gone. There remain only our two gas fires, which are going to burn another hour or so before being extinguished.

So it goes, through the long, long hours of the long, long night. The never-ending whine of approaching machines; the roar of guns; the crack of exploding shells high in the heavens; the clang of fire engines and the occasional swift rush of an ambulance; the high-noted siren of a "suicide squad" hurrying to deal with a time-bomb; shouts, and the sounds of struggle; curses and exhortations; the *psing* of falling splinters; the tinkle of broken glass; and always, through all and over all, that deadly *crump* of bombs. When people boast in days to come, there are some who are going to be able simply to say, and have no need of saying more, "I was a citizen of London."

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## *Chapter 18*

# AMERICAN OUTPOST

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THERE were approximately 20,000 Americans in Great Britain at the outbreak of war. Four thousand of them are still there.

Americans are a ubiquitous breed. There are surprising numbers of them always traipsing around the world. There are surprising numbers of them living abroad. In the summer, when Iowa schoolmarms and Michigan magnates go sightseeing, the population of the United States may drop by 200,000 or 300,000 in the course of a single month. There were 50,000 Americans in Europe in the spring of 1940. God knows what they were doing, but there they were.

We had a hectic time with the 20,000 caught in England. We didn't know at first that there were

so many. We thought we had about 10,000. We sent 12,000 home and then found that we had nearly as many still to go. We finally got rid of all except 4,000.

The Americans still in Britain fall roughly into three groups—professional people, people of dual nationality, and those who have retired to England to live.

Most of the professional people are business men. Some represent American firms; others head British subsidiaries. There is a sizable group of newspaper correspondents, and there are always, of course, the representatives of various departments of the American Government.

The people of dual nationality are principally American women married to Britishers. For some reason American girls go for the old school tie. This is hard on American men and English women, who don't seem to hit it off with nearly the same facility as do their opposite numbers. The Anglo-American families of Great Britain are a perpetual headache to our immigration authorities.

Wealthy Americans—and some not-so-wealthy—frequently go to England to retire. They find the gentle life of the English countryside a relief from the hurly-burly of life at home. There is much to be said for living in England. I have wan-

dered around thirty countries and I must say that, next to America, the English life suits me best.

Americans living in Great Britain are subject to all the dangers and harassments which beset the English, plus many more. Although Americans are considered to be "friends," they are officially classed as aliens and must, therefore, obey all the rules and regulations imposed on foreigners. This means that they may not enter a prohibited area; that they must advise the police of every change of address; that they may not possess guide books, or weapons, or certain kinds of maps; that they may not drive automobiles without special permission; that they may not possess a sea-going craft; that they must be home by midnight if they live in London, and by 10:30 if they live in the country. Some Americans resent, as an insult, the term "alien"; others realize the difficulty of differentiating between foreigners and make the best of the war-time restrictions.

Most of the Americans who have left England since war broke out have gone in two batches. The first bunch went in the fall of 1939; they were mostly tourists. The second bunch went in the spring of 1940; they were largely residents. The 4,000 who remain are practically all either people who have lived for some time in England or who have business, professional or official reasons for being there.

The launching of the Blitzkrieg brought a renewed demand for transportation to the United States. Some 1,600 Americans, who had previously decided to stay on, now concluded that they had made a mistake. They swarmed into the embassy and demanded a ship. So far, Washington has not seen fit to send one. I think this is a great mistake.

I know these people were warned several times that the vessels sent over in June and July, 1940, would be the last. That is all water over the dam. The important thing now is that 1,600 Americans who want to go home have been imprisoned in the British Isles. They can't travel on foreign ships and there are no American ships. They are denied even the privilege of being refugees. In the words of an advertising friend of mine, they are denied "the fundamental right of any human being to fend for himself." Throughout history, nations have always evacuated their nationals. Our government may have some deep reason for refusing to send a ship to England but, on the surface, it appears that we are behaving more like Montenegrins than citizens of the United States.

For years and years, Americans who wanted to get out of a danger spot have had to depend on the British or the French or maybe the Dutch to help them. It is about time we began to look after our own people. If we want to be a great power,

and if we want men to go out and promote foreign commerce, to represent our newspapers—yes, to represent our government—we can't tell them to go to hell when they happen to get caught in a war. Officials of the American Government are, right now, sitting six and seven weeks in London waiting for a seat on the plane to Lisbon because there is no direct way for them to go home. Incidentally, I can't follow the reasoning of the Department of State in allowing Americans to leave England in belligerent flying boats and, at the same time, denying them permission to travel on surface boats. I should say that the flying boat was, until recently, much the more dangerous of the two.

Americans in England are living in the front lines of a war. They are being bombed. One man has been killed to date, and several injured. A number have lost furniture and personal effects. It is only a question of time until there will be additional—and perhaps substantial—casualties among those who are now stranded in Britain.

The American Government may be officially neutral in this here war; there is little neutrality among Americans in England. They are about ninety-nine per cent pro-Ally and they are among the most energetic workers over there for the Allied cause. Nowhere is the mythical character

of American neutrality more clearly revealed than in Britain.

Americans are joining the armed forces right and left. Several thousand have come to England as soldiers in the Canadian Army. An all-American fighter squadron, known as the Eagle Squadron, has been formed. The squadron consists of thirty-odd volunteer pilots, led by Bill Taylor, thirty-five-year-old former member of the United States Navy Air Corps. The members include stunt pilots, crop-dusters and commercial fliers from all sections of the United States. The boys are about to go into action as this book is written.

American men resident in England have formed a Mobile Division to help fight the Germans if and when they invade. The men are a part of the British Home Guard. They wear British uniforms (with a distinguishing badge) and serve directly under Sir Bertram Sergison-Brooke, Major-General in charge of the defense of London. Because they merely agree to obey orders, and do not swear allegiance to King George, these men do not lose their American citizenship. A social headquarters for the use of Americans serving in Allied forces has been established in Charing Cross Road, London. It is known as the Eagle Club.

A special song has been composed for the club

by Manning Sherwin, American composer. Incidentally, Sherwin is responsible for Britain's most popular war-time song to date, "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square."

Members of the American Mobile Division are drilled by Scots Guards in London. On Saturdays they go into the country for rifle and machine-gun practice. The men have provided their own cars. The Division is probably the most strongly-armed military unit in existence. Every member bears arms and each car is a little arsenal of machine-guns, Molotov Cocktails, sub-machine-guns and rifles. The unit was designed primarily to resist parachute troops, but it should be equally effective against invaders from the sea.

The Mobile Division was created by Adolf Buquor, manufacturer and inventor of mobile equipment used by the United States, Canadian and British Armies. Buquor hopes to enlist about 250 Americans resident in England. The London unit, consisting of sixty men, is under the command of General Wade Hayes, who served on General Pershing's staff in 1918 and is now Managing Director of a British electrical corporation. General Hayes operates under the slogan, "All aid for Britain—short of nothing!"

A marine unit of the Mobile Division is now being organized to assist in patrolling the Thames.

American charity has been many-sided and



widespread in Great Britain. The principal organizations through which relief has been dispensed are the American Red Cross, the Allied Relief Fund and the British War Relief Society. The latter two organizations have now joined forces and will operate henceforth under the name of the British War Relief Society. About ninety per cent of all aid going to Britain passes through the Red Cross.

There are many other organizations assisting the British—the American Ambulance, the Bundles for Britain group, the American Society for the Aid of Foster Children, the Committee for the Evacuation of British Children, and so on. There are some 300 organizations collecting money in the United States for foreign relief. About half of them are collecting for Britain. They make our official protestations of neutrality sound a bit fishy.

The American Embassy in London, as a spokesman recently pointed out, is “still doing business at the old stand.” Bombs have fallen all around the embassy but thus far the building itself has not been hit. The closest bomb landed in Grosvenor Square, about fifty feet from the front door. It threw stones and mud on the front of the building and broke a couple of windows. There has been no other damage.

Another bomb landed at Number 6 Grosvenor Square, three doors from the embassy, in the house

occupied by Walter Hines Page when he was Ambassador to London. A number of R.A.F. boys who were billeted in the building were killed and injured. The embassy sent over tea and first aid equipment. A doctor from the naval attaché's office also went over to offer his services.

Mike Scanlon, air attaché, and his wife, Gladys, were walking in Brook Street at the time of the explosion.

"Oh look," said Gladys, "there's a German plane."

"Don't be silly," chided Mike, in the manner of husbands the world over, especially when they are discussing a subject about which they know all there is to know. "That's a British plane."

And then *bomp*, and the next thing Mike and Gladys knew they were lying in the street and feeling very foolish—especially Mike.

A few feet further along the street windows have been blown out of the stately old building which housed the first American diplomat to be accredited to the Court of St. James's, John Adams.

He hardly could have imagined the things that were to happen to this lovely old square.

Across the square a great residence has been demolished. It was laid waste by a bomb which was one of a string of six which fell by the embassy; it is an awful mess. Everybody thought

the house was empty. It developed later, however, that there had been a caretaker in the building, and the rescue squad went to work.

Twenty hours after the explosion, after cutting through more than three feet of concrete wall, rescue workers found the caretaker. He was found sitting on the lavatory, unconscious but alive. The first thing he said, when he came to in a hospital, was, "Get my wife and child." It seems that he had been letting his wife and child spend nights with him in the basement of the old house, figuring that it was safer than his own place. Rescue workers went at the wreckage again, but it was days before they were able to get to the trapped mother and her child. They were both dead.

I went up to Oxford Street one day, just before noon, to get some things at a stationery store. As I came down Davies Street, on the way back, there was a loud explosion. A bomb had fallen behind Lansdowne House, at the bottom of Curzon Street.

A teamster was passing Claridge's as the explosion occurred. The horse jumped violently, throwing the teamster out of his dray. He landed on his head. A policeman and an ARP warden came running and we laid the man on an automobile cushion. He was unconscious and blood ran out of a nasty gash on his forehead. He was a stocky little man, with grimy hands and square fingers. Just another casualty in the Battle of

London. The ambulance arrived and they took the old man away. He shuddered as they picked him up to put him on a stretcher.

I went down the street to see the damage. The bomb had landed in the back of a new flat building. It had gone into the basement, where a large number of workmen were changing their clothes. I asked one of the wardens how many had been killed.

"We have enough pieces to make 23 people," he said, "but we don't know which pieces belong together. One of the torsos was stuck on the ceiling."

One Saturday morning I was sitting by the window in my office with Franklin Gowen, Second Secretary at the embassy. It was a nice clear day and there had been no warning. Suddenly we heard a bomb coming down. Franklin and I jumped to get away from the window, yelling to Beryl Hare, my secretary, to do likewise. The bomb went over us and landed in Davies Street, with a dull *crump* which made little noise but shook our building a bit.

At the same time there was a light thud in the street outside my window. We looked out and saw a patch of white powder about the size of a washtub. The powder had landed in a chunk and seemingly had come from the same plane which dropped the bomb. A crowd of people immedi-

ately collected around the spot. Everybody had a different idea about the nature of the powder, but most of us were inclined to agree that it might be dangerous to handle. A truck driver stopped and took some of the powder away to show to an ARP warden. Some R.A.F. lads came along and also took a sample.

The mystery of the powder was quickly solved when we went over to see the damage. The bomb had landed in an old house and blown it to smithereens. It had also showered the entire neighborhood with pieces of stone. Buildings for blocks around were peppered. We noticed that the pieces, when they hit the side of the building, pulverized like the one which had landed outside my window.

We built two very swanky air raid shelters at the embassy. They cost about \$7,500 and they hold forty persons each. They are clean and comfortable. They are equipped with lavatories, telephones and a desk. There is a blower system for fresh air, complete with gas filters. There are batteries to operate the motor, in case the electric power fails and, if the batteries fail, there are cranks for hand operation. The only trouble with these shelters, like all shelters in England, is that they don't have any roof on them. By that I mean to say they are not bomb-proof. And any shelter

which isn't bomb-proof is, so far as I am concerned, a total loss.

Several auxiliary establishments have been set up by the embassy in England. There is one at Headley Park, another at Coworth Park, and a third at Epsom. The men and women living at Headley have made themselves an air raid shelter in an old well. The shelter part consists chiefly of a brick top. They have installed seats and a floor in the well, and have put sandbags around the outside. The shelter cost \$28. It is a bit chilly in the winter and a bit warm in summer and, in season, it is likely to be filled with mosquitoes.

So far, none of our government staff in Britain have been killed. Several, however, have had very narrow escapes. They are good soldiers. I have seen them, day after day, working away through air raids as though they were back in Detroit or Des Moines, and not in the midst of a battle. They resist going into the shelters, even when roof spotters warn that planes are directly overhead. Bombs have fallen all around the place. I have never seen anyone get excited. It takes a time of crisis to reveal the true worth of our representatives abroad; the taxpayers are certainly getting their money's worth out of those men and women in London.

I don't know any better way to show what our representatives in London are up against than to

quote a note sent around by the embassy radio operator on the morning of September 8, 1940. Every night the embassy receives news sent out from Washington by the Navy Department. The morning after the Blitz started our news bulletin was somewhat smaller than usual. The operator explained it thus:

“Due to the close proximity of dropping bombs, and failure of the power supply, the remainder of this bulletin was not received.”

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## *Chapter 19*

# HITLER'S SECRET WEAPON

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HITLER, on September 19, 1939, announced at Danzig that the Germans had a secret weapon. The Fuehrer went on to say that this weapon could not be used against Germany. Inasmuch as Hitler was in Danzig nineteen days after the opening of hostilities with Poland, people were inclined to take him at his word. The Fuehrer had done a lot of ranting, to be sure. However, there was no getting around the fact that he had also cleaned up the Polish army in record time.

It is now 1941. Hitler has added to the conquest of Poland the subjugation of Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. He has hitched a couple of Balkan powers to the German chariot. The Anti-Comintern Pact has been re-



vived as the Berlin-Rome-Tokio Axis. Hitler has gone a long way. He has joined Alexander, Frederick and Bonaparte as one of the great conquerors of history. So far as we know, he has not yet produced his secret weapon. One wonders if there is a secret weapon and if so, what it is.

I am inclined to think that Hitler, who had an answer for Poland, who thwarted the "water line" of Holland, who turned the Maginot Line, also has a plan for Britain. The plan probably won't succeed—at least, we hope it won't succeed—but we should be foolish to assume that a man who has done so well in the past isn't going to give an equally good account of himself in the future. I remember all too well how we deluded ourselves last year, and what a shock we got when the Germans came out of their winter's sleep with a smashing offensive that might well have won the war. The Germans have been frustrated in their attempts to dominate the air over Britain; we must not kid ourselves into believing that they have been licked. They still have the offensive and, until that fundamental fact is altered, any victories that may be achieved by Britain are negative at best. Hitler swung and he missed; that doesn't mean he isn't going to swing again.

What is Hitler's secret weapon? Is it a new technique of war? Is it a new type of plane? Is it an amphibious tank?

It is quite possible that Hitler, in his Danzig speech, was referring to the new technique of warfare which had proved so successful against the Poles. It was to work equally well against the Dutch, the Belgians and the French. The use of mechanized units, in conjunction with aircraft, worked like a charm on the Continent. So far, Hitler hasn't had an opportunity to try it out against Britain. It doesn't make any difference how mobile, or how heavily armored, the German divisions may be; they can't go to work until they get across the English Channel. I don't think that Hitler was referring to the methods used on the Continent when he spoke of the weapon being forged for use against the English.

There have been many rumors of new types of German planes. One is said to be a high-flying bomber capable of operating at 40,000 feet. That would be above the effective range of anti-aircraft fire. Presumably, it would also be above the range of enemy fighters. German planes have been found very high over England but, so far as I know, none have yet been found so high that the R.A.F. couldn't get to them.

An American living in Germany once came out with a report that the Nazis were constructing tank-carrying planes for the invasion of Britain. There was supposed to be 200 of these machines, each capable of carrying a thirty-ton tank. The

tanks would be lowered through a trapdoor and then turned loose on the English countryside. If such a thing ever is attempted, the tanks will have to be dropped by parachute as the fields of England have been covered with obstacles to prevent the landing of enemy planes.

A naval friend of mine thinks that the Nazis may try to make a landing with amphibious tanks. Such tanks reportedly were used on the Meuse. It might be possible to send them across the Channel in hundreds, even thousands, and get a sufficient number ashore to do some damage. The cliffs would prevent such a landing around Dover but it might be achieved along a low-lying section of coast, such as the Goodwin Sands. The English undoubtedly have made plans to deal with such an eventuality.

The time-bomb may have been Hitler's secret weapon. If that is true, the secret weapon has failed. The English have got the time-bomb under control. The same applies to the magnetic mine. The Germans got twenty-seven ships with magnetic mines in the space of a single week-end. The Admiralty got one out of the sea, dissected it and, within a few days, had an answer.

Every ship entering British waters is now equipped with the so-called DeGaussing device for protection against magnetic mines. This weapon, like the time-bomb, has had its fangs

pulled. The Germans must have more magnetic mines than they know what to do with, for they have been dropping them on land, complete with expensive firing devices that fill no useful purpose. I have a piece of one before me as I write.

Have the Germans got something new in torpedoes? Inventors have long been trying to devise an "eye" for steering torpedoes to their targets. A couple of years ago someone was supposed to have perfected a torpedo which could be fired under a vessel, and which would automatically steer itself at the dark bottom of a ship's hull. Do the Germans have something along this line? I doubt it. Submarine warfare is being waged pretty much as it was in the last war.

Last summer the English suddenly changed their money. When the English change anything, especially money, there is bound to be a good reason. The reason, in this case was to prevent the Germans from using English notes taken from conquered countries. There may also be some connection between this change and a report that the Germans had printed great quantities of foreign money and that this money would be used to undermine British finance. The money, so the story went, was to be placed in circulation by enemy agents; some of it might even be dropped by plane. The result would be the same in each case—financial chaos. Quantities of this phoney money, in-

cluding American bills, have been found in Spain.

This theory gets some support from an event which took place in Eire. During the spring, when I was in Dublin, the Irish police raided a house suspected of being a headquarters for German Fifth Columnists. They found a couple of German parachutes, some documents (including maps of Irish airports), a portable radio, and—more important for the purposes of this discussion—some \$200,000 in counterfeit American currency. One of the parachutists was captured; the other is still at large. The Germans, who are so thorough about most things, were not very smart in this case. They made the mistake of giving their sky spies hundred-dollar bills. Anybody who tries to spend a hundred-dollar bill in Ireland is bound to be either a Fifth Columnist or an American millionaire. These fellows didn't look like American millionaires; the result was that one of them got knocked off and the other was forced out of circulation.

Among other ideas that have been attributed to Adolf by the British are bacteria bombs for the spreading of disease, a spray for destroying crops, poisoned pellets to be used on cattle, acid, and, of course, gas. So far as I know, none of these ideas have yet been put into practice but I shouldn't be surprised if gas were used before this war is over.

Conjecture about Hitler's secret weapon has led

to a number of scares in Great Britain. There have been frequent reports of mysterious objects found here and there, and presumably dropped from German planes. A few of the objects have been found to be dangerous; the majority, however, turned out to be harmless.

At Broadhill, one day, gardener Agate found a thermos flask in the orchard. The day before a couple of shop girls in a nearby village had found a package containing German food, wrapped in a German newspaper. The police had warned people to be careful what they picked up. Agate was sure that the thermos flask must have been dropped from a plane, as it had not been in the orchard the day before. He asked Edward to come and take a look at it.

Edward looked the flask over carefully and saw on the bottom "Made in England."

"Don't touch it," said Agate. "That's the way them Germans fool you."

Edward finally picked it up. It rattled, as though the glass were broken inside. "Don't turn the cap," Agate cried. "That's when they go off."

They finally took the flask to gardener Brockway, who, unsuspecting, took the cap off and settled the matter.

Along in September there was considerable to-do over the discovery of white threads in fields in various parts of the country. These stories grew

until the threads were practically ropes. Government experts went out to examine them and found that they were nothing more nor less than spider webs and, in some cases, the film left behind by slugs.

The white powder stories got the greatest attention. Periodically, someone would find a batch of white powder lying in the street or perhaps in a field. The idea took hold that here, at last, was the secret weapon. We had heard a great deal about the new arsenical compounds which acted when wet. Hah, we thought, the Germans are going to sprinkle powder all over the country. In the first rain, or in the first fog, the powder will generate a deadly gas and wipe out the population of these islands.

The powders, upon investigation, proved to be harmless—usually such things as flour and cement. The case of the scare in Worthing is typical of the others.

In Worthing, one day, a citizen reported breathlessly to the local ARP that there was a pile of mysterious powder in the roadway. The neighborhood warden refused to have anything to do with it, insisting on calling in his chief. The chief in turn notified the police. By this time a crowd was collecting. The word got around that the powder was believed to be arsene, the gas of which would

go directly into the blood stream and cause instant death.

The gas squad were notified. They came with steel cylinders and took samples of the powder. Then the decontamination squad arrived, all rigged out in oilskins, boots, rubber mittens and gas masks. Aided by the fire department, they scrubbed down the pavement, sprinkled it with lime and pronounced the street safe for traffic.

The sample, meanwhile, was being analyzed by a local chemist. He reported that he could not identify the substance but that it consisted principally of starch. The ARP people accordingly went to Brighton to another chemist. After exhaustive research, he yelled "Eureka," or whatever the chemists of Brighton yell when they have made a great discovery, and announced to a breathless audience that Hitler's secret weapon, in this case at least, consisted of—baby food!

The most amusing part of the whole affair was that the woman who had been responsible for the excitement was there all the time. It seems that the food had been purchased in bulk, by a young mother who put it in the pram with her baby. The baby kicked the bag out. The bag broke and blew away, leaving the baby food (Benger's) in the road. By the time the mother discovered her loss, the village was in an uproar and the poor woman was afraid to confess her part in the affair.



Late in October, a number of small objects about the size of a baking powder tin were dropped in England. The public was warned not to handle them. It was felt that they might be explosive bombs or that they might contain some corrosive substance. They were nicknamed "booby bombs." They were apparently harmless and no one has been able to figure out why they were dropped. Maybe the German airman were just having some fun.

The first fire bombs dropped by the Germans caused a lot of speculation in Britain. We were all agog in August when several drums containing a mysterious liquid were dropped in Bristol. The mysterious liquid turned out to be oil and the drums turned out to be drums. The combination turned out to be a fire bomb.

There are many in England who think that Hitler's secret weapon is a longrange cannon. During the World War the German forces bombarded Paris from emplacements seventy-four miles away. London is only eighty-six miles from the Continent. If the Germans could shoot seventy-four miles twenty-five years ago, surely they should be able to do an extra twelve miles today.

It was freely rumored in London in September that projectiles resembling cannon shells had been found in the city. The rumors gained added credence from the occasional dropping of bombs

when airplanes were not known to be over the capital. British officials queried about the report said, "Hooey—complete hooey." That seems to have been the proper explanation.

Most of the conjecture about a secret weapon naturally revolves about the subject of gas. The British have always paid a great deal of attention to this possibility. Two years before the outbreak of war they began the manufacture of enough gas masks to take care of the entire population of 47,000,000 persons. Masks were first distributed at the time of the Munich crisis. Another distribution was made upon the outbreak of war. Sixty million have been handed out altogether.

Precautions have also been taken to gasproof houses and air raid shelters. Householders have been instructed to set aside one room as a retreat from gas and to make it gas proof. The simplest precaution is to hang wet blankets over the doors and windows. Some people have bricked up windows and built in special doors. Owners of large private shelters, and government departments, have installed filtering devices to keep out gas.

Infants have caused much worry. The masks originally were made in two or three sizes, the smallest of which was designed to fit a child of five. For children under five, there was no protection. The best advice that our local warden was able to give my wife about Carol, who was one

year old, was "Wrap her in a wet blanket and carry her to the nearest shelter." Such a situation naturally panicked the mothers. To have masks for part of the family, and not for the rest, was worse than having no masks at all. The government got busy on the problem and soon evolved a helmet for infants. Protection is now available for every person in Great Britain.

Animals have also been a bit of a problem. The English, who are sentimental about few things, are very kind to animals. Anti-vivisection societies flourish in Britain; they plaster the country with posters and put the bodies of maimed animals in shop windows to show the cruelty of experimentation on dogs and cats. Despite this attitude, the authorities have been adamant about allowing animals to be taken into public air raid shelters. The result has been that thousands of persons have refused to take cover themselves.

Under pressure of pet owners, private groups have developed various devices for the protection of animals against gas. The simplest consists of a hood to tie over the animal's head; the most elaborate, and obviously the most humane and effective, is a box with a filter. It may seem strange that people should worry about animals when thousands of people are being killed and maimed but I suppose it is, on the whole, a revealing mani-

festation both of humanitarianism and of the solidity of the national character.

Will the Germans use gas?

There are disturbing indications that the war may well take that turn. The official British attitude, while not apprehensive, is one of being ready for every contingency. Members of the services are required to carry their gas masks at all times, even when on leave. Police and ARP wardens all carry respirators and, it has been noticed, shift them to the "ready" position on their chests whenever the siren goes. Gas drills are frequent and thorough in every branch of the armed services and of the civil defense groups. Even at sea the men are taught the routine of protection and decontamination.

Protection against gas plays a prominent part in ARP work; in fact, energy devoted to a menace which has not (thus far) materialized has greatly reduced the effectiveness of the country's defense against those menaces which have materialized. Nonetheless, the British can't afford to take any chances. Just as the other branches of civil defense proved their worth when the time came, so the gas-protection measures will if and when the Nazis make the fatal plunge into this type of warfare.

If you travel in the country in England today, you will frequently come upon yellow boards

mounted along the highway. These boards are about a foot square and they are placed at an angle atop posts five or six feet high. They are part of the gas-detection system. If the yellow boards turn green, that means there is gas about and you had better dig out your respirator.

The authorities have done their best to induce people to carry their gas masks but it is a hopeless task. After each fresh warning, people will carry them for a few days, then begin to get careless again. In a few weeks, only a small proportion of the people you meet—outside of military people, police and civil defense workers—will have their masks. At one time they were being left in London buses and tramcars at the rate of 500 a day. The authorities, making a house-to-house canvass, found them behind bathtubs, in the coal bin, perhaps on the rubbish heap. Some parents had given them to the baby to play with. Sometimes, as an old uplifter, I get very discouraged over the outlook for homo sapiens.

Will the Germans use gas?

I have heard many stories in England which point that way. There is the story of the English nurse and the German pilot. The pilot is supposed to have become very fond of his nurse in the English hospital to which he was taken after being shot down. When it came time for him to be taken away, he is reported to have told the girl:

"You have been very nice to me here. I don't know how to repay you. The only thing I can do now is to warn you—never go out without your gas mask after September 15."

It will be noted that this anecdote ties in with the stories of the attempted invasion, which was supposed to have taken place on September 15. It is possible, of course, that this pilot was acting under instructions; it is also possible that he wasn't.

I have been told that German prisoners, of whom there are some thousands in camps scattered all over the country, seem to be very worried about gas. They are very careful of their respirators, and, it is said, grab them with something approaching panic whenever the alarm goes.

Reports from Sweden, it is said, show that Germany has increased her imports of arsenical products twelve-fold during the past year. It is feared that these products, a by-product of Swedish smelting, may be intended for the production of a deadly compound to be sprayed over England. Arsenic powder, when brought into contact with moisture, gives off a deadly gas. It is argued by some that the Germans plan to pour this powder over the country, then let the first wet day—never very far off in England—generate a gas which would kill people by thousands. There is also the possibility that the enemy might release this pow-

der or a heavy gas during a fog and let the shifting British mists do the rest.

Certain pessimistic individuals have suggested that respirators would not be of much use against arsenic powder. The powder, it is said, would get in the filter. Moisture from the air would then combine with the powder to produce gas. That means you would have a miniature gas-producing plant *inside* your respirator. One doesn't have to be an expert in these matters to envision the result.

The British apparently took the arsenic threat seriously. Owners of gas masks have been told to bring them in for the fitting of an additional filter, believed to be effective against arsenic.

Goering, in a recent statement, hinted that the Germans might let the climate go to work for them. He may have been referring to something else, but the wording of his remarks may well indicate an intention to use gas. The occasional claims in Berlin that the English are using gas support this possibility. The Germans, said Goering, would strike at the proper time, in their own way; the weather thus far had been against them; they were waiting for "a good east wind." The Nazis have a great chemical industry at their disposal. Could they set up huge gas generators on the coast, wait for a favorable wind, then let go? Here is a kind of invasion it would be difficult to stop. Was this what Hitler meant when he said

he had a secret weapon that could not be used against Germany?

I don't think considerations of humanity will cut much ice in this respect. It is not any worse, when all is said and done, to gas people than it is to blow them to pieces with explosives. Some of the new bombs are so powerful that they collapse the lungs; they may even convert them into water. Asphyxiation by gas is probably no worse. It is to be hoped, of course, that no new methods of killing people are devised; we've got too many now. Nonetheless, we must be prepared to face the possibility—probably the likelihood—that gas will be used in the present war.

There are only two considerations, it seems to me, that will carry any weight with the Germans. I ignore the fact that all of the belligerents have agreed not to use gas. We know what happened to other agreements made back in the days when international commitments seemed to mean something. The two questions that will decide the issue, in my opinion, are these: (1) Will gas work? (2) Can the enemy retaliate?

The military experts are divided in their opinions about the effectiveness of gas. Maybe gas isn't the menace some people have thought it to be. Maybe it is. I can't attempt to settle the controversy.

That brings us to the other consideration. Will



the English retaliate if the Germans use gas? I should say that the English certainly will retaliate. The only trouble, so far as the English are concerned, is that they might be knocked off before they could strike back and that their retaliation, even if launched, would be trifling compared to the strength of the attack. The only ray of light here is the possibility that the United States might come in and make the reprisals really amount to something.

I personally feel that the war is likely to develop into a conflict of naked reprisals, including the use of gas. The people of each side realize that they are fighting for their existence. Individuals fighting for their lives don't worry much about rules. This is also true of nations, only more so. They have all developed the instruments of chemical warfare. History shows that weapons, once made ready, are generally used. I have an uneasy feeling that history in this instance is about to repeat itself.

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## *Chapter 20*

# WILL THEY INVADE?

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THE big issue in this war, the one which dwarfs all others, is the possibility of a German invasion of Great Britain.

The invasion question really consists of two questions. They are: (1) Did the Nazis invade? (2) Will the Nazis invade? The answer to the first question is, in my opinion, no; the answer to the second is, in my opinion, yes.

Did they invade? Everything that I have seen and heard in England indicates that something was afoot in August and September. Hitler is reputed to have said that he would be in Buckingham Palace by August 15. On August 8, the Germans made their greatest air attack up to that time; on August 15, a thousand planes came over; on Sep-

tember 7 came the Blitzkrieg on London; on September 15 the Germans sent over another armada of planes. Each time the Germans were driven off with heavy losses.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Nazis in each instance planned an invasion for the middle of the month. Each time they would have had a full moon, and each time the tide would have been just right.

Churchill, on September 11, broadcast a sober message to the English people. He said:

"No one should blind himself to the fact that a heavy, full-scale invasion of this island is being prepared with all the usual German thoroughness and method, and that it may be launched now—upon England, upon Scotland, or upon Ireland, or upon all three. We must regard the next week or so as a very important period in our history."

Hundreds of barges were assembled in continental ports all the way from Narvik to Bordeaux. Convoys of merchant ships were moved into the Channel. The French coast was cleared of civilians. The roads and railways were jammed with men and material moving to the ports. These things took place in August, and again in September. There is no other explanation which fits the circumstances, except that Hitler was about to launch a direct attack on the British Isles.

The district in which I was living, deep down in

Sussex, was in a Defense Area. Night after night, long columns of lorries rumbled by our house. Dispatch riders roared through the darkness and tanks went down the Brighton Road literally by the hundred. We were told one night (I believe it was September 14) that no cars would be allowed on the road after nine o'clock. The reason given was that the troops were going to practice moving equipment from one section of the coast to another. We felt there was something in the wind and decided to walk down to the main road and see what was going on. We set out about 9:30. We had not got very far when we were stopped by a soldier.

"You are not allowed to go further," he said.

We later heard from people in the village that no equipment at all had gone through that night. Apparently the authorities were keeping the roads clear *in case* they should have to move anything!

We returned to the house and went on the roof. Planes were coming in a constant stream. The searchlights were passing the planes on from one group to another, all the way to London. Everybody was watching for parachutists in those days. We stared into the sky for hours and once or twice thought we saw one when the lights would hit the bottom of a cloud. There was a shotgun in the house and we were always debating whether or not we should use the gun if a parachutist landed

on our place. We knew that we would be regarded as franc-treurs if we did. We also knew that parachutists, in their own interest, had to shoot on sight. I am afraid of that, if one had come down at Broadhill, we would have had to pop him in self-defense.

We knew, as we sat on the roof, that men from the village and neighboring farms were prowling the fields. We waited for the sound of firing. It never came.

Did the Germans invade? We know the English expected them to invade. We have the word of everybody, from Churchill down, for that. Whether or not the Germans actually tried it is another matter. Everything I have been able to uncover seems to prove that the German intended to invade but that the R.A.F. succeeded in breaking up their plans.

Rumors that there had been an attempted invasion flew about thick and fast in the middle of September. A grand attempt to cross the Channel allegedly was made on August 25. According to this story, the R.A.F. beat back a German fighter escort sent with the barges and British artillery, then made mincemeat of the boat. Eventually, units of the British fleet are supposed to have appeared behind the barges to complete the work of destruction.

The most fantastic story came out of France.

This tale also had it that the Nazis made two attempts. Thousands of men are supposed to have perished when the English blew up tanks of petrol which had been anchored below the surface of the water. French hospitals were said to be filled with German soldiers suffering from terrible burns.

A friend of mine, who is stationed at an R.A.F. camp near Southampton, told me that pieces of barges and the bodies of Nazi soldiers had been washed up on the south coast. He said that the barge wreckage was so plentiful that the proprietor of at least one seaside resort had had his fuel problem solved for the winter.

The truth of this whole matter seems to be that the Nazis got ready to invade but that, for some reason or another, the actual invasion didn't come off. The chances are that the R.A.F. made it too hot for them. I have heard (from a good source) one explanation of the bodies and the splintered barges which sounds extremely plausible. The Germans, with their usual thoroughness, were making practice invasions on the French Coast. At night they would take the barges offshore so that, when the English bombers came over, they would be bombing empty harbors. The English finally caught on to this dodge, and got a bunch of the barges at anchor. They gave them a good

plastering. The barges broke loose and were washed up on the English coast.

A military man who has investigated this thing carefully tells me that the Germans manned the barges three separate times but that each time they were smashed up before they could get away. The last time, he says, was when the navy shelled Cherbourg.

One thing which kept the invasion stories going was the mysterious appearance, at a London railway station, of a contingent of captured Germans. Airmen are always being taken through London on their way to prison camps. These men were not airmen; they were soldiers, and they were obviously freshly-captured soldiers. Had they been caught trying to land on the shores of Britain?

The answer which, so far as I know, has not yet been revealed, is simple. *The men were captured in France.* While the world has been talking about a German invasion of Britain, the English have been carrying out an invasion of their own. For months, I have been informed unofficially but reliably, a major with two cuts on his cheek, who did rearguard action at Dunkirk, has been leading a group of raiders in sorties against the French and Dutch Coasts. The men are mostly Glasgow Irishmen, some of the toughest fighters in existence; there is also a sprinkling of Australians and Canadians. They get around \$60 a month. This is

four times the army pay and three times navy pay. There are between 400 and 500 men engaged in this work, and they generally operate in groups of forty. All are enlisted men who have volunteered for special duty.

The men are taken over in destroyers on dark nights. They go ashore in small boats and land in wild places. I understand they have done some great work in blowing up gun emplacements, barges and ammunition dumps.

The men take dynamite with them. They are armed with revolvers and some of them carry automatic rifles. Their favorite weapon, however, is the knife. The Glasgow Irish are noted for their dexterity with this weapon. It is related that one of these fellows encountered a German in the last war. He swung with his knife just as the German stuck a bayonet through his stomach.

"That's the time I got you," said the German.

"Oh yeah," said the Irishman, or words to that effect. "Wait until you try to move your head."

Well, to get back to our invasion, it seems that the boys got thirsty one night in France and went into an estaminet. They found that the place had been pre-empted by some Germans. They didn't want to kill the Germans in cold blood and they couldn't afford to turn them loose. The only solution was to bring them along. That is why German soldiers were seen in the streets of London.



Will the Germans invade? I don't see what else they can do. There are only three ways, it seems to me, in which Hitler can whip Britain. They are by air, by submarine, and by invasion. Hitler has tried it from the air, and failed. The submarine menace is serious but it can be beaten; besides, it is too slow. There remains only invasion, and I am convinced that Hitler, sometime or another, will shoot the works in the realm where he has thus far proved irresistible—the land.

The idea that Hitler could not cross the Channel in bad weather has been abandoned in Britain. There are many who now believe that Hitler, instead of dodging bad weather, is waiting for it. They think that a good fog—natural or chemical—will be of great assistance to him.

A German general, Kabisch, writing in the *Koelnische Zeitung*, declared recently that the war could be won for Germany only by the German Army. He discounted the ultimate power of the Air Force. This remark, coming at a time when weather ordinarily interferes with air operations, may indicate that the Nazis are going to try an invasion without air support. Channel weather sometimes grounds planes for three and four days at a time. What will happen if Hitler comes at a time when the R.A.F. can not function? The operation then would be one between invaders and defenders. If the Nazis could neutralize the Royal

Navy by means of mines or shore batteries, they might be able to get away with their invasion.

Hitler has repeatedly said that he would risk a million men in an attempt to conquer England. He well knows that, so long as this island sits astride the trade routes of Europe, he can never rest secure, no matter how complete is his domination of the Continent. Hitler has got to beat England in order to save himself from ultimate defeat. And, in order to beat England, he has got to invade her—and invade her quickly. That is why I think that, sometime within the next few weeks or the next few months, the German legions will be thrown across the Channel in a single desperate bid for victory.

The English Channel, at its narrowest point, is barely twenty miles wide. It should be easy to get across twenty miles of water. The trip can be made in a rowboat or a canoe. Men and women have swum it. Yet for a thousand years, this “miserable little ditch” has kept the British Isles inviolate. Hitler may succeed where Philip of Spain and Napoleon failed. He isn't going to succeed without one hell of a fight.

The British have taken amazing precautions to minimize the risks of invasion. A curfew, requiring all aliens to be in at night, was imposed last spring. Defense Areas were set up around the coast and aliens were forced to leave these areas.

Motorists are required to lock their cars in the daytime and to put them out of commission, through the removal of a vital part, at night. If the police find any cars which have not been rendered useless, they do it themselves, usually by letting the air out of the tires.

People are forbidden to keep petrol in their homes or cars. Most petrol stations have been compelled to close up. Usually the police allow one station to remain open in a city of any size; small towns are likely to be left without any station at all. The idea, of course, is to immobilize Nazi tanks if any should get loose in the country. The few petrol dealers who are allowed to remain open have been given instruction for making their petrol useless in case of an invasion. The method prescribed, I have heard, is to smash the pumps and then pour cement into the tanks.

A new verb has been coined to describe the removal of a vital part from a car. The verb is "de-Quisle," a dubious tribute to the role of Norway's Quisling in the subjugation of his country. Aliens are not allowed to have radios in their cars and certain classes of aliens are not allowed to have radios in their homes.

Tank obstacles have been erected on all highways leading inland. These usually consist of enormous concrete blocks which close the highway except for a space the width of one vehicle.

Holes have been dug between the blocks. The holes are fitted with wooden covers. At the proper moment, mines will be laid in the holes and the covers replaced.

Huge ditches have been dug across the country to act as tank traps. Sometimes these ditches were dug outright. Whenever possible, creeks and small streams were utilized. The beds have been deepened and piling placed along the inside banks to prevent tanks from clambering up the slope.

Steel rails have been sunk in the ground at various places.

Householders long ago were ordered to surrender firearms to the police. Cameras and binoculars are forbidden in some areas and rather regarded with suspicion elsewhere. Along the south and east coasts, boat owners were ordered to immobilize large craft and to remove all small craft from the water and carry them inland.

Open spaces have been covered with obstacles to prevent the landing of planes or gliders. Some of the fields have been covered with old cars. Logs have been used freely, as well as old sewer pipes, cement columns, and so on. Poles have been placed upright in many fields. Sometimes wire has been strung between the poles. Wire has also been strung across the main highways to prevent their use by planes. On one stretch of the road to

Brighton, arches constructed of iron pipes have been bent over the highway.

In the very beginning, before the tank obstacles had been put in place, old cars, farm machinery, fences, logs and what not were collected in piles at strategic places along the roads. For a period of several weeks some of the barricades were actually in place. They were constructed in such a way that a car had to come almost to a dead stop in order to twist through.

Barbed wire has been placed along the beach through most of the South and Southeast. Concrete posts have also been used freely, and most of the coast is mined. These mines, of great explosive force, have been going off for months. Sometimes they are uncovered by the action of the water and bounced around until they explode. Pieces of timber washed up on the coast will also detonate them. Windows have been blown out all along the coast.

Bridges are guarded, and some are understood to have been mined. Sandbag barricades have been put up by bridges, both rail and highway, by tunnels and by many intersections. Trenches have also been dug at many points. The British, in this matter, have moved in a way that indicates they are not as slow as some people seem to think.

Britain now has about 2,000,000 men on military service. There are another 1,700,000 in the Home Guard. Compared with the land forces of

Germany and Italy, the number of men available for the defense of Britain is not large. However, the men are getting first-class training; they are being well equipped and it is believed that—with the advantage of the defense—they should be able to handle any number of men that Hitler is likely to get across the Channel.

These fellows will fight like fiends. I suspect the women will pitch in and help. The authorities have been worried about civilian resistance and have warned people to leave the fighting to the armed forces. I am afraid the civilians are going to forget the government's advice, when the Germans come, and that a lot of them are going to get killed.

Last spring, when things looked bad, half a million men sprang to arms over night. I should say they sprang to whatever they could get their hands on, for many of them didn't have guns. Men went out to wait for parachute troops with clubs, axes, pitchforks. Policemen went into the fields with their truncheons. I heard of two guards on a railway in the south of England who had one gun between them. They left the gun under a viaduct and then patrolled away from it for a mile on each side. The citizens have done this sort of thing before. I imagine that, when the time comes, they will do it again.

Home Guard units in some communities have

prepared boxes of grenades to be placed by the village pump. They have also prepared bottles of gasoline for use against tanks. The bottles have a small wick stuck on the cork. If the wick is lighted and the bottle is then dropped on a tank, the result is said to be very painful for the men inside.

The English may dawdle about some things. There is one thing that really brings them to life. That is the possibility of any foreign soldier setting foot on the sacred soil of Britain. Did you ever watch an Englishman sing "God Save the King?" Did you ever hear the kids chanting "There'll Always Be An England?" Did you ever study a Sussex farmer in his fields? Did you ever listen to a bunch of teamsters in a pub, roaring out:

"We'd fight for our right to the island,  
We'd give them enough of the island;  
Invaders should just bite at the dust,  
But not a bit more of the island."

It is no accident that this island has not been invaded since 1066. It is no accident that Hitler hasn't tried it long before this.

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## *Chapter 21*

### RECEPTION COMMITTEE

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REGARDLESS of whether or not Hitler ever succeeds in invading Britain, some Nazis already have landed on English soil. They are the crews of the 3,000 enemy airplanes which have been shot down over and around England since the war began.

It is estimated that approximately 7,500 German airmen have been brought down altogether. The military authorities have declined to give the number of men taken prisoner. I understand, however, that about three-fourths of the Germans shot down over Britain have been killed in the process. That means that the number of prisoners should be somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000.

Nazi airmen have landed in every part of the



country. They have landed in cities, in fields and forests, in the water, and on the moors of Devon and Scotland. They have landed in the heart of London. They have come down on buildings, in trees, on telephone wires. The English have buried the dead and cared for the wounded. The prisoners have been put away in camps located in the less populous sections of the country.

Two questions naturally suggest themselves in connection with the descent of German airmen on Britain. One concerns the behavior of the airmen; the other concerns their treatment by the British.

The Nazis, from all accounts, are inclined to be surly. They usually click their heels and give the Heil Hitler salute.

When I left London, people were telling a delightful story about the experience of a British officer in the Southeast. This officer got tired of watching the Nazis click their heels. He accordingly told his men to take the Nazis' boots off before bringing them in. The result is said to be very funny.

The Germans seem to have some quaint notions about the progress of the war. A fighter pilot brought down at Tangmere was taken into the Mess for a drink. He said: "I will drink to you, the first man to bring down a German pilot over

England." He wouldn't believe otherwise until he met his friends in the prison camp.

The Germans apparently have been told that part of England is in their hands. Several pilots, upon landing, have demanded to be taken to German officials in occupied territory. One lad, told that the nearest German officials would be found on the other side of the Channel, replied: "They are at Reading. It is useless to lie to me. I know all about it." Other captured fliers seem to have the impression that Scotland and Ireland have been occupied and that the British fleet had been sunk. Several of them have had English-German dictionaries among their effects.

The Nazis realize that London is still in English hands, but they apparently have the notion that the city is practically destroyed. To disabuse them of that notion, the English like to point out such landmarks as the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace. The English also like to take their prisoners around to the hotels, department stores, theatres, and so on, to let them see how little the war has affected everyday life. I have heard of one who went a bit goggle-eyed at the abundance of food which he saw at Claridge's. After one of the trips, the boys are much more likely to talk than before.

The British have found a great difference in the responsiveness of captured airmen. It appears

that, on the average, the fair-haired Saxons—from Prussia, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg—are well-behaved but uncommunicative. The dark-haired Bavarians—from Wurtenburg, Dresden, Nuremburg and Saarland—are impudent at first but, with the proper treatment, are likely to talk their heads off. As a result, a British officer receiving prisoners will probably ask them to remove their hats so that he can separate the blonds from the brunettes.

Nazi fliers seem to be a bit apprehensive about what is going to happen to them when they bail out over England. Considering what they are usually up to when they have to bail out, their concern is easy to understand. I have heard of several instances where the Germans have refused food and drink, fearing that they would be poisoned. One pilot said: "Don't take me to a hospital. The government uses hospitals and churches for storing munitions. That's why we have to bomb them." This may explain why thirty London hospitals were hit in the first month of the Blitz.

A captured German pilot said he had bombed London thirty times. "I wish I could do it thirty times more," he said defiantly. "This isn't anything compared to what you have done to Hamburg."

A young pilot was brought down at Folkestone.

He had been machine-gunning women and children on the sea front. It turned out that he was an old Cantab (Cambridge student) and spoke English well.

"What kind of a soldier are you," asked a British officer, "machine-gunning women and children?"

The German replied:

"I have got as bad an opinion of that sort of warfare as you, but I am just the pilot. When I am told to come down to twenty meters, I come down to twenty meters. I don't know my navigator or my rear gunner. The chances are there is a Gestapo man in the plane. Therefore, I obey orders."

A doctor was summoned to look after two members of a bomber crew. One of the men was wounded and later died. The doctor noticed that the other showed no concern, and he asked him the reason.

"Why should I care?" the Nazi retorted. "I never saw him before we took off to bomb London."

I met a major in the Royal Artillery, stationed near Hell's Corner in Southeast England, who has seen scores of captured Germans. He said that most of them were first-class fliers of adequate experience. He has not seen many novices and he has seen few boys under twenty. The major

thinks that the morale of half the Germans is excellent but that the other half are tired and fed up.

A member of the Eagle Squadron (composed of American fliers), with whom I have talked, doesn't agree with the major. He says:

"Don't let anybody tell you that the morale of the German airmen is shot. Their morale is excellent; in fact, some of us wish it weren't so good. They seem to have a fanatical belief in the justness of their cause and in their ultimate victory."

One is always hearing in England of German fliers who run out on the Luftwaffe—and bring their planes along. I have only come across two instances that impress me as being authentic. One took place on the Southeast Coast, where three German fighters attempted to land on a British airdrome. The British, thinking they were up to something, shot down two of them. It was not until they had captured the remaining pilot that they learned all three were trying to surrender.

A friend in Sussex told me that he saw a German bomber land in a cabbage patch at Steyning. The crew was all right, the machine was not damaged in any way, and its guns had not been fired. The pilot had obviously decided to quit.

The English are also playing host to a few Italian airmen who arrived on Armistice Day. Some of them had tin hats and bayonets. They also had champagne, chianti and a five-pound

cheese. It is not recorded what happened to the refreshments.

The first German airmen to be shot down in England were treated with great kindness by the people. That was before the Germans started to bomb cities. Little old ladies were always rushing out to give the Nazis a cup of tea. Workmen might stand them a drink in the village pub and, if they happened to come down in the sea, the chances were that a Grimsby trawlerman would come to their rescue with dry clothes and brandy. When a German airman who had crashed off the Suffolk coast was buried at Felixstowe, this message, signed by "A Mother," was found attached to a bunch of chrysanthemums.

"Rest in peace. God will forgive—for you knew not the wrong you did."

Dead Nazis are buried with military honors. This has led to complaints from some quarters that the authorities are more considerate of enemy dead than they are of their own. There has also been some criticism of the elaborate care given to enemy wounded. Considerable feeling was aroused in a Midland town recently when a German airman was placed in the same hospital ward with some of his victims. Relatives of the injured civilians seemed to think it would have been more tactful if the authorities had placed the airman in another ward, or even in another hospital.

"The first thing we know," said one embittered Britisher, "they will be appointing a reception committee to greet these fellows."

After the Germans went to work on cities, and casualties began to mount up into the thousands, the feeling about German airmen wasn't quite so friendly. I have never heard in England any of the bloodthirsty threats which we in America used to make about the Kaiser during the last war. There is no doubt, however, that the English have been outraged by the killing of civilians and that they aren't worrying too much about where their bombs land in Germany.

One hears, especially among soldiers, some weird and gruesome tales about things that have been done to German airmen. Most of these stories concern Canadians, who seem to be just about as much of a problem for the English as they are for the Germans. During the last war we had the crucified Canadian story in France. In this war we have a plethora of stories in which the Canadians are doing the crucifying.

Canadians at one camp are reported to have sent to the War Office a letter along the following lines:

"Dear Sirs: We got a German prisoner. We scalped him. If you want to see the scalp, you will find it hanging in the mess hall."

I don't know whether the boys from Montreal

were playing Indian or whether they were trying to have some fun with the War Office. I give you the story for what it is worth. I don't believe it myself.

Among other yarns that one hears in Britain are these: Canadians at Banstead pulled a German pilot to pieces; Canadians in another camp hung a prisoner from his parachute harness; Canadians near Reigate cut the ears off a German; women at Kennington kicked a Nazi to death. This latter story is the only one that sounds half-way plausible to me. I got it from a friend who claimed to know a man who had seen it. Many women and children have been blown to pieces in Kennington. I should hate to face the mothers of that district after dropping bombs on their children.

A German pilot landed near the Kennington gas works. His parachute became entangled in electric light wires and he was left dangling ten or twelve feet above the ground. Hundreds of people gathered. They shook their fists at him and tried to grab his legs. The airman was very relieved when police and soldiers arrived to cut him down.

In pleasanter vein is the experience of a German crew shot down while bombing an airdrome near London.

"We are your prisoners," the pilot said to the officer who came to arrest them.

"You are damned right," said the officer. "The



first thing you do is go out there and fill up those holes.”

For the next few days the Germans shoveled mud.

I gather that some of the Nazi airmen invite mistreatment by their belligerent attitude. There is the case of a wounded Nazi airman who panned English doctors, bemoaning the fact that he had no good German doctors to fix him up. In the middle of his tirade he had the misfortune to faint.

“Don’t worry,” the doctors told him when he came to; “you’ll be all right. The chances are that you will have better manners, too, now that you’ve got a couple of pints of good Jewish blood in you.”

A German officer came down in Essex. When a Home Guard in battle dress came up, he said haughtily, “Stop. You can’t arrest me. I demand to be arrested by an officer of my own rank.” The HG, it is reported, smacked him.

The British maintain a fleet of speedboats off the coast for picking up their own men. They also pick up German airmen whenever they find them. One of these boats has a Polish crew. They never seem to bring back any Germans.

I am sure that the English do not officially countenance any mistreatment of prisoners. It is much more to their interest, as a matter of fact, to keep prisoners in good humor in the hope that they can get some information out of them. A man with

a black eye isn't very likely to talk. Any mistreatment that might take place would be the result of individual action and not official policy. With a couple of million men under arms, most of them idle and itching for a scrap, it would be a miracle if some incidents didn't occur. On the whole, however, the treatment of prisoners seems to be very good. I have a feeling that many of the Nazis are not appreciably worse off than they were at home.

My friend Pat Murphy has a farm near Hortham. Near his farm is a camp where several hundred German prisoners are confined. Pat has a son, Edward, who is sixteen. Edward, who speaks German, went over to the camp one day to talk with the prisoners. When he came back Pat asked him if the English sentries had not objected. Edward replied:

"There was only one and he was asleep on a bent bayonet."

An exaggeration, of course, but an exaggeration which indicates that the German prisoners aren't too unhappy in England.

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## *Chapter 22*

# BRITAIN STANDS

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CASUALTIES and damage in the Battle of Britain have been much less than was expected.

The British expected casualties of 30,000 a day. Dead and wounded have, of course, averaged only a fraction of this figure.

Damage to property, while heavy, is not serious in relation to the total resources of the country. The British naturally refuse to give out any figures on damage, holding that such information would help the enemy. They have, however, issued statements showing the number of museums, churches, hospitals, and so on, that have been hit. Using these figures as a basis, and supplementing them with data secured from other sources, I have come to the conclusion that about two per cent of

the buildings in the London area (or 20,000) have been destroyed or seriously damaged, and that total damage must be in the neighborhood of \$750,000,000. Damage for the country as a whole probably amounts to \$1,000,000,000. These figures naturally are just the estimates of a close observer, but I am going to pass them along as my contribution to a very obscure subject.

The thing to remember about both casualties and damage is that, no matter how alarming they may appear to be, they are small in relation to the total population and to total resources. Deaths are running about 1,000 a week. The killing of a thousand people—half of them women and children—every week is a terrible and brutal thing. Yet, viewed against the backdrop of the country's total population and birth rate, the figure is unimportant. It is going to take the Nazis 900 years, at the present rate of killing, to denude the British Isles of people.

Actually, it will take much longer. Casualties tend to decrease as time goes on. There are several reasons for this. For one thing, people disperse into safer areas; for another, they build themselves shelters. Finally, less cautious people are likely to be killed first, resulting in a lower death rate for those who remain.

Rupert Trouton, economist, broker and whaler, puts it thus:

"People and flies are very difficult to kill. Did you ever try to swat a fly? Hitler is having the same difficulty with us."

The death rate in England today is not appreciably greater than it was before the war. Ordinarily a certain number of people die every day from old age, disease and accidents. Hitler has stepped up the rate a little; from an actuarial standpoint; that is all there is to this Blitzkrieg business.

It is not the dead who count in aerial warfare. It is the effect which bombs have upon the living. Statisticians declare that one's chances of being within fifty yards of an exploding bomb in London are one in 256,000. This ingenious figure apparently was arrived at by comparing the area of Greater London with a circle having a radius of fifty yards. The figure looks all right to me and I have no doubt that one's chances of being hit by an individual bomb are not greater than one in 256,000.

The danger, however, is not to one's body but to one's mind. Fear is not limited to a radius of fifty yards. The chance of panic unfortunately is greater than the chance of injury. Hitler in September might well have panicked 7,000,000 people by killing 7,000. The first two weeks were the crucial period. That was the time when Hitler might have whipped our minds.

The English are used to bombing now. It has lost much of its terror. It has become one of the hazards of life, like pneumonia, like drowning, like fire. A thousand people a month are being killed on the highways of Britain. Every working day 650 workers are injured in factories, and four are killed. The people don't go into a panic over these casualties. They are getting adjusted to the point where casualties from air raids become just as commonplace. Eighty per cent of those interviewed in a British Gallup Poll, taken at the height—or the depth—of the Blitzkrieg, said that bombs would not beat Britain. Only six per cent thought that Hitler could win in the air.

In Britain, even the investors can take it. The market has been remarkably steady. The City (London's financial district) remains optimistic.

Strangely enough, the bombs now being dropped on London are killing fewer people than those dropped in the last war. The Germans dropped seventy-four tons during the last war. These killed 851 people, or about eleven per ton of bombs. The Germans are only getting about two per ton in the present war.

Hitler's difficulty in killing people in sufficient numbers to make a dent on the population is matched by his difficulty in destroying property. England is a small country and yet, in relation to bombs, it is very large. Ninety per cent of the

island is open country. Three-fourths of all the bombs that are dropped fall on undeveloped land. There are thousands upon thousands of craters in the fields of Britain.

London alone is a huge target. It is a target that is too big to miss; the Germans have also found that it is too big to destroy. Greater London is 693 square miles in area. It has 7,000 miles of streets and nearly a million buildings. All the bombs in Germany cannot do more than make a dent in this vast agglomeration. As the people can take it, London can take it.

Figures on industrial damage are even more difficult to obtain than those regarding other aspects of the Blitz. I don't think it has been of any great consequence, taking into consideration the industrial capacity of the country as a whole. Production of essential commodities is greater today than it was when the Blitzkrieg began. The British have been bringing new factories into the war effort at a steady pace. I am sure that German bombs have not decreased production; the worst that they can have done is to diminish the results which might otherwise have been obtained.

The workers are getting into their stride in this air raid existence. In the beginning, they were likely to run for shelter the moment the siren sounded. Gradually, as they got used to bombs and bombers, the workers spent less and less time in

the shelters. A leading industrialist with whom I talked, thought that production might be as much as twenty per cent below what it would have been if there had been no air raids. His figure covers everything—damage to plants, time lost in Alerts, and decreased efficiency as a result of loss of sleep. I should say that the figure is now nearer ten than twenty per cent.

There are between 5,000 and 6,000 factories in the war effort. The number out of production at any one time, due to enemy action, has rarely exceeded 100.

The workers have achieved marvels in getting damaged factories back into operation. A friend, director of a shell factory, was telling me of his experience with bombing.

The Germans dropped an aerial mine by parachute. It landed in the street outside the factory. The factory is in the middle of a residential district. Twelve houses were wiped out. Thirty more were partially demolished, and 120 have had to be evacuated. Eight people were killed.

The windows were blown out of the factory office, and part of the wall was destroyed. The entire roof was lifted off the factory. The roof was made of glass. The men went to work next day cleaning up the débris. When it rained, they worked in mackintoshes. The drafting section was moved into a machine shed which still had



its roof intact. The office staff worked in the open. They put tarpaulins and asbestos paper over the roof, and in five days the plant was back in full operation.

Production, which had been declining before the explosion, leapt upward. The men had previously refused to work during raids. Apparently, they were afraid of flying glass. When the glass roof had been removed, they felt much better. Now, my friend says, they work through every raid. The men are angry about the bomb damage and work better than ever before. From now on they will work under artificial light all the time.

A big danger to this plant, as to others, is the possibility of something happening to the electricity. Most of the machines are electrically-operated; and the shutting off of the juice would immobilize the entire plant. The English, however, have perfected an excellent grid system which enables them to shift from one circuit to another in case of damage.

My friend says there is no sign of panic or defeatism among his workers. The plant employs about fifty girls, who put the finishing touches on shells. One day thirty of these girls came to the manager at four o'clock in the afternoon and said that they wanted to go home. It looked as though the morale was beginning to crack. However, it turned out that the girls lived in a large flat build-

ing which had been hit that day at noon, and they were naturally anxious to get home to see what had happened to their families and effects. The next morning they were back on the job as usual.

The machinery in the factory has suffered very little damage.

"It is hard to injure machinery by blast. You can knock down buildings and walls, but only direct hits by hard substances seem to injure machinery."

Blast, nevertheless, does freakish things. In this factory, a draftsman had left open a drawer in which lay the drawing for a new machine. It had taken the staff two months to complete the drawing. The blast sucked it out of the drawer and tore it to bits. It took three weeks to make a duplicate.

Much more difficult than keeping up production has been the maintenance of communications, transport and utility services in Britain. The water, gas and electricity mains have been broken in hundreds of places. The railways and the highways have come in for special attention. The maintenance of telephone and telegraph lines and mail service has been especially difficult. Thirty-five thousand telephone lines were put out of commission in London during the first three months of the Blitz. The service goes on more or less as usual.

I think the answer to this whole question of whether or not the Blitzkrieg is undermining Britain's ability to defend herself is answered by the state of the utilities. Note these simple facts:

- (1) You can still mail a letter in London in the afternoon and have it delivered the next morning.
- (2) You can send telegrams.
- (3) You can telephone to other cities.
- (4) You can go anywhere in the country by rail, bus or automobile.
- (5) You can get water, gas and electricity as usual.

The service, of course, isn't what it used to be, but you can take it from me that the utilities are still functioning in Britain.

I don't know of any vital military objectives that have been destroyed in London. The great Battersea Power Station, the most conspicuous feature of the London skyline, continues to function. Not one of the twenty-odd Thames bridges has been destroyed. Although every railway station in London has been hit at one time or another, not one has had to be abandoned.

The food situation is still good. Sugar, butter, tea, bacon and certain other kinds of meat are rationed. There is plenty of practically everything else needed for a normal diet. As one of the gro-

cery chains advertises, "We carry 2,000 items in our stores; only five of them are rationed."

Some things, although not rationed, are beginning to get scarce. Among them are eggs, cheese, oranges, lemons and onions. The importation of bananas has been prohibited to conserve shipping space. Generally speaking, however, there is plenty to eat in England and, unless the shipping situation continues to deteriorate, they should be all right for another six months at least. The key to the whole thing, of course, is shipping, as about a fourth of the English people must depend on imports for food.

I have not observed any shortage of fuel although, at the beginning of the winter, there was some trouble in London due to congestion on the railways.

People are always asking me what life is like in England today. The only answer I can make is that, although the outward forms have been greatly changed, the basic activities continue more or less as usual. The majority of the people, while they may sleep elsewhere, still live in their own homes. They still go to work, read their papers, attend the movies, listen to the radio and enjoy their favorite sports. Footballers still strive for a goal. They may have to run for shelter before the match is over, but the important thing is that they continue to play. There is still racing in England. I have

a copy of the *Daily Sketch* before me as I write. The headline on the sports page is, "League Chiefs Called To Deal With Soccer Crisis."

The shops are still open in London. The windows are piled full of the sort of merchandise that would make a German hausfrau go green with envy. English girls have had to give up silk stockings, but the substitutes don't look too bad. London tailors are doing a rushing business. The English make a fetish out of business as usual, and they are pursuing it to a degree which sometimes makes me wonder if they realize they are in a war.

People are spending more. They are buying themselves comforts, converting money into goods. The cost of living is rising slowly. The purchase tax has accelerated this tendency. Eventually luxuries will be forced off the market. If you are interested in bargains, you watch the newspapers for a salvage sale. That is the modern English equivalent of the American fire sale.

If you go to see a movie, you probably will have to stand in a queue. Most of the London places close at seven p.m.

Church services are being held as usual in beleaguered Britain. The principal difference is that the rector is not allowed to ring the bells. The iron bells of England have been silenced and they will not be rung again so long as the war lasts, except in case of an invasion. The Archbishop of

Canterbury asked permission to use the bells on Christmas Day. The military said no.

If you walk through the streets of London, the first thing that impresses you is the great number of sandbags; you will see them on every hand. You will notice that a good share of the windows have been blown out and that the store fronts are covered with boards, chicken wire, tar paper, or whatever the proprietor has been able to procure. There is a great shortage of glass. Even those shops which do have windows are likely to have small ones in place of the usual plate glass.

You will notice that the traditional London bobby has been replaced by ARP wardens. There is one of these men on every corner, each with gas mask and steel helmet.

There is less traffic in the streets. The cars which remain seem to go faster.

Most of the restaurants are still open. The steaks are smaller and somewhat tougher. You get a pat of butter the size of a marble, and exactly one lump and a half of sugar. If you are lucky, you get an egg. Outside of that, you may order pretty much at will. You will get an older waiter than you had before, but he will serve you equally well. If you are wise, you will eat in a basement place; it is safer.

You will see many wrecked buildings. If you are not careful, you will get the impression that

half of London is in ruins. It is a good idea to count the undamaged buildings and then note the ratio between the two. The percentage of buildings down will be surprisingly small.

The daytime life of Britain has not been greatly changed by the war. After dark, things are altogether different.

Most people try to get home by daylight. If they don't they are likely to get caught when the first bombers come over. A new kind of social life has come into being. People stay at home. They eat earlier. They read more. Evening activities have been pushed back into the daytime. Tea dances have come into fashion again, as they did in the last war. Even morning dances have begun to put in an appearance. Performances of Shakespeare, the ballet and concerts are given during the lunch hour. Dining out in England used to be a ceremony. It has been given up; likewise cocktail parties. If you ask anybody in for dinner today, you had better be prepared to keep him for the night.

There is, strangely enough, less crime. It would seem that the black-out should be ideal for criminals. It has not worked that way. There has been some thievery from shops, especially those with broken windows, and some looting. Both are being brought under control.

Morals are incomparably improved. Illicit romance does not flourish in a general shelter.

Education has suffered. Probably half of the children of Britain are not getting regular schooling. Young schoolmasters have been called up and their places have been taken by women and by older men who had retired.

There are more opportunities for women in Britain today. Women are doing many jobs formerly done by men. They are serving as bus conductors, railway ticket clerks and telephone operators. They are building boats, driving trucks, sweeping chimneys, washing windows and making munitions. Barbers are training their wives and daughters to take over when they are called up. An army of young women has gone into the fields to help increase the production of food. Girls are learning to repair cars. I would swear that I heard one morning, while shaving, a new female announcer on the BBC.

The military situation remains good. The army and the home guard are on the alert for an attempted invasion. The navy, although spread out dangerously thin, is in fine fettle. Sinkings of merchant ships vary anywhere from 40,000 to 150,000 gross tons a week. This is, to my way of thinking, the most ominous development of the war.

The R.A.F. rules the skies by daylight, and is battling mightily to perfect a means of defense



against the night raider. They seem to be having some luck with night fighters over Germany. These machines "sit" on the German airports to catch returning bombers. They are said to have caught a few and to have tangled up operations for the rest.

The Germans claim to have destroyed two or three English planes for each of theirs lost in daylight fighting over Britain. The answer to that is, if the Germans were winning the day fights, why did they stop coming?

The morale of the people of England, considering what they have been through, is unbelievable. The Englishman, of all people in the world, can adapt himself to any conditions. He is used to hardship and discomfort. Moreover, he has, deep down within him, that innate faith in his own invincibility which is the true basis for all morale.

The English love their country. They go out to colonize all over the world, but they come back to England to die. The preponderance of migration is inward, not outward. This tiny island, unable even to feed itself, annually draws to it more people than it sends out. The people of Britain can walk down the streets of their cities and see with their own eyes evidence of 2,000 years of civilization. It is ten centuries since the last invader set foot on these shores and, even then, he did it by a fluke. It is no wonder that the British are con-

vinced that they will survive the latest threat to their insularity and freedom.

The British trust their leaders. Sometimes I think they trust them too much. Had they been a bit more critical in the 1930's, perhaps they wouldn't have had to enter the 1940's with a war on their backs. Somehow they seem to muddle through. Mostly they just hang on until the other fellow dies of exhaustion. They have fought half the nations on earth at one time or another. They have been licked only twice, and those times by other Englishmen. I have a feeling that, by the grace of God, and with the help of the United States, they are going to pull through again.

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## *Chapter 23*

# AND NOW—WHAT ABOUT AMERICA?

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BRITAIN stands. Whether or not she continues to stand depends largely on the United States.

Make no mistake about it: The chances of a British victory without large-scale help from the United States are exceedingly slim. The British are making a great fight. They will get better as they go on. They will hang on, if necessary, for years. But I just don't see how one little island of 47,000,000 people is going to be able to beat the 250,000,000 people of the Axis powers and their subject territories.

Britain, you may say, has the Empire. I know. The Empire, unfortunately, is spread all over the

globe. The white population is negligible. The greatest reservoir of manpower, India, which contains about one-sixth of the population of the earth, is torn by civil strife. The British Empire, as great as it is, is not, in my opinion, going to be able to whip the Axis without a lot of help from the rest of the world. Mostly, that means us.

I am purposely being hard-boiled about this matter. I think it is about time we stopped kidding ourselves. We have been fooling around for several years now. Eventually, we are going to have to come to grips with reality. The sooner we do so, the better will be our chance of salvation. The British listened to optimistic palaver for years. There is no reason why America should make the same mistake.

Let's put this thing on the dissecting table.

We have, briefly, three nations who aren't satisfied with their share of the earth's surface and who have set out to get more. All are governed by dictators. One wants a "New Order" in the Orient; another wants a New Order in Europe; the third wants whatever he can get. They have knocked off eight or 10 weaker powers to date and have persuaded a couple of others to get in bed with them. The Axis powers have done right well up to this point. The only thing that stands between them and the consummation of all their hopes and de-

sires is a group of peoples known as the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Americans have been known to ask: "Of what interest is this to us? Nations come and go. They have been taking things away from each other throughout history, and probably will continue to do so for centuries to come. What difference does it make to us who owns Singapore or Saigon or Suez? What does it matter whether or not a handful of Czechs in the middle of Europe preserve their independence? What possible concern is it of ours if the *Regima Fascista* decides to operate on Abyssinia?"

These questions seem perfectly logical and yet, for some reason, the efforts of Germany, Italy and Japan to expand have become of great interest to the people of the United States. Why?

The first thing we have to do, in a situation like this, is to ask ourselves (1) What would be the consequences of an Allied victory, and (2) What would be the consequences of an Axis victory?

The consequences of an Allied victory are easy to define. Generally speaking, there wouldn't be any. Britain is fighting to preserve the *status quo*. Maybe the *status quo* shouldn't be preserved; I am not going to go into that. The thing that concerns us is that the present division of wealth is very much in our favor and that anybody who disturbs it isn't going to be very popular out our way. Not

at all; we've got ours and we aren't going to give any of it up to anybody. What's more, we are bound to sympathize with those nations which, like ourselves, are satisfied with what they have and are willing to fight in order to hang on to it.

The problem actually isn't quite as simple as that. Some nations are richer than others, just as some individuals are richer than others, because of greater enterprise and hard work; or because they got there first. I don't know any way in which we can standardize the wealth of nations any more than we can standardize the wealth of individuals. We eventually may achieve equality of opportunity, but the present conflict—an international stick-up, pure and simple—isn't going to carry us very far in that direction.

There is one fundamental fact that Americans must get through their heads about this war. That is that it is a revolution. These three nations, who have pulled guns on their neighbors, want to redistribute the wealth. The important thing—and this is where America comes in—is that they want to do it on a world-wide basis.

We come now to the second part of our question—What would be the consequences of an Axis victory? The answer is simple. The consequences of an Axis victory might well be catastrophic for the future of the United States.

The aggressor powers have already told us what

they have in mind. They have been very explicit, painfully explicit. The Japanese want the Orient; Hitler wants Europe; and he and Mussolini together want Africa. "All the land in sight I take for myself; all the land not in sight I take for my son Absalom." That's all there is to it. That's what they mean by the "New Order." It may be a New Order to them, but it is an old, old order to the rest of us. Just whack your neighbor over the head and turn out his pockets. If he squawks, take his wife; if he continues to squawk, drop a bomb on his children.

Now, I know it can be argued that the present system is all wrong and that the world is over-ripe for revolution—both domestically and internationally. The trouble with the present war is that those who want to share the wealth internationally maintain themselves internally by means of the most savage dictatorships of our times. They have stamped out every vestige of liberty within their own countries. They have enslaved the workers and reduced the standard of living. I am all for revolution when other means for the redress of grievances have failed, but this revolution, I submit, is a phoney. All honor to a true revolutionist, battling to better the lot of the masses, but let's not make the mistake of falling for a gangster.

What would be the consequences of an Axis victory? First off, Hitler's hold on the Continent of

Europe would become permanent. The Japanese, unless stopped by Russia, would take over the Orient. Mussolini (if he lasted long enough to be in at the kill) would get his *mare nostrum*.

The Germans would get nice pickings in England. This little island is a treasure house. Here is the greatest shipbuilding industry on earth, a great steel industry, coal and iron. Here also, don't forget, is an aviation industry capable of turning out 2,000 planes a month.

Hitler, with all Europe under his control, would be the most powerful man on earth. He would have at his command shipyards with a capacity of five or six times that of the United States. He could outbuild us in the air, for the next year or two at least, by five to one. I don't for a moment imagine that he would try to move immediately against the United States, but there is always the possibility that these fellows, realizing that they could never be completely secure in their conquests with America sitting implacably between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, might try to knock us off before we had time to arm.

The long-range viewpoint is much the more serious. I can't see a very happy future for America in a world dominated by Hitler and Mussolini and the Japanese generals. It is just asinine, to my way of thinking, to imagine that the Axis powers—with half the world in their hands—would



ignore the richest prizes of all. When we are talking about empires, let's not forget that the United States is sitting on the most highly-concentrated piece of wealth on this earth; that another prize lies, rich and defenseless, to the north of us; and that, in addition, we have undertaken to defend 20 undeveloped republics to the south—some of which are much closer to Europe, and the philosophies of Europe, than they are to us.

The Nazis have, thus far, done little damage to the aircraft factories of Britain. Some of these plants are truly enormous, so widespread and conspicuous that it would seem no airman could miss them. The ports have had surprisingly little attention. So far as I know, not a bomb has ever been dropped on a British shipyard. The Clyde and the Tyne are full of work, both naval and merchant. They are not molested. Is Hitler preserving the aircraft factories, the ports and the shipyards for use against us?

Even if this totalitarian triumvirate should leave us alone, our position still would not be a happy one: Germany, Italy and Japan would control the bulk of the earth's raw materials; we would have to do business on their terms; we would have to live in a state of perpetual preparedness.

We must not forget that, when England falls, a good share of the earth falls. The Axis propa-

gandists have already told us what they propose to do with the British Empire. We don't need to be told what they propose to do with the Dutch, Belgian, French and Portuguese empires. The United States, with the possible exception of Russia the most self-sufficient of nations, is still dependent on outside sources for a score of materials vital to her existence. The important ones, of course, are tin and rubber. I, for one, don't relish the prospect of being dependent upon the Axis for raw materials.

In addition to controlling most of the resources of the earth, the Axis powers—if they win—will also have an unlimited supply of cheap labor. One doesn't have to know anything about economics to imagine what they could do with the manpower of China, India and the conquered countries of Europe. Germany and Japan can already undersell us in many lines of manufacturing. What couldn't they do with half of the earth's surface and 1,000,000,000 people under their control?

Yes, it looks like tough sledding for America if the Axis wins. We shall have to arm to the teeth, and stay that way. We shall have to accept a lower standard of living. That budget never will get balanced. It is going to take money, and lots of it, to put 20,000 or 30,000 planes into the air, support a two-ocean navy and keep a couple of million men constantly under arms. It would

be much simpler, it seems to me, to help Britain now and thus relieve ourselves of the possibility of having to stand alone, for many years to come, in the depths of this threatening international jungle.

Many of our people seem to have the idea that this question of aiding Britain is a simple choice between peace and war. It is not that easy. There is no sure road to security for the United States. All roads are dangerous. The only choice we have is as to which may be less dangerous. The choice is a very difficult one, for the course which appears to be less dangerous today may, in the long run, be the most perilous of all.

For eight years we have watched the onward march of the aggressor nations. We have been confronted with crisis after crisis in our relationships with them. Each time there have been numbers of our people who have said that the particular issue involved did not concern us, and that, if we would mind our own business, we would be all right. However, each crisis was succeeded by another, and each new crisis seemed to affect us more vitally than the one before. Like Britain and France before us, we now have to decide whether we are to make a stand and, if so, when. The experience of the past shows that the danger to us, instead of diminishing, gets greater every day. The march of events indicates that eventually we

shall have to make a stand. If that is true, then we had better do it while we have allies, and not wait until we are left to face the Axis alone.

We have tried every expedient to keep out of trouble. We have refused to loan money to belligerents. We have kept our ships out of belligerent waters. We called our people home, and we denied visas to others who sought to enter danger areas. Does anyone believe that we have achieved security? I say we are closer to war now than we were in the beginning. I say we are in greater danger than we ever were. It might be answered that we have not been really neutral, despite the measures we have taken to observe an attitude of official neutrality. I do not care what the explanation is; the fact of the matter is that we now feel less secure, and more disposed to fight, than we did before we tried to take refuge in the illusion of neutrality.

We Americans have played an ignoble part in this whole affair. We were among the first to recognize the menace of Hitlerism, and it appears that we are to be the last to do anything about it. We declined even to sell munitions to those who were menaced by the New Order, and, at the same time, panned the daylights out of them for not standing up to the dictators. We would not appease Hitler, but when it came to helping anybody else who was willing to resist, we said,

"Sorry, but it's not our fight. What Hitler does is none of our business. We don't live here; we're just visiting."

It is a mystery to me why those who did stand up to the Axis are not more puzzled by our attitude than they are.

Eventually, after several years of participating emotionally but not materially in the effort to stop aggression, we condescended to sell munitions to those who were waging what we considered the good fight. I remember crossing on the "Manhattan" last year with a Finn who had been in America buying shells for his government. He was very low. He had been wined and dined all over the country, and nearly drowned in the tears shed for "poor little Finland." When it came to helping him, however, we tried to give him agricultural machinery. When he finally did get his hands on some money for the thing the Finns really needed—bullets—the price had gone up 300 per cent. We don't want to do that to the English.

It appears that the English have now scraped the bottom of the till. If we have any sense, we won't worry about money; we will just give them whatever they need. Fifty thousand airplanes, 1,000 merchant ships and a couple of hundred naval vessels will go a long way toward winning the war. It is a small price to pay for security. Suppose we give them \$10,000,000,000 worth of

munitions; that's what we will be spending every year if we have to face the Axis alone. Even the isolationists are now whooping it up for armaments. If we have no stake in this war, if we have nothing to fear from the Axis, why should we build up our defenses?

So far, we haven't really got our teeth into this thing. We are building a Navy that will be ready in 1946, a Merchant Marine that will be ready in 1944 and an Air Force that will be ready (we hope) in 1943. We are turning out less than 1,000 planes a month. Little Britain, meanwhile, is doing twice that many, and God only knows what the Germans are producing. There is nothing in our defense record thus far to justify any claims to greatness either in the realm of government or in the realm of industry.

Most of my countrymen, I have discovered since returning home, have an exaggerated notion regarding the contribution which we have made to the British war effort. Actually, we have—up to this point—done nothing except permit the British to buy things from us on a cash-and-carry basis. I don't doubt that, before we are through with this thing, it is going to cost us plenty but, thus far at least, we have served only in the role of seller.

I sometimes wonder why the British are so grateful to us, and why they persevere in a strug-

gle which can only mean hardship and suffering to them and the destruction of everything they value in life. They could make a deal with Hitler any day in the week. Instead of debating whether or not we should aid them—and, if so, how much—we had better get down on our knees and thank God that somebody had nerve enough to stand up to the aggressors, and to continue to stand up to them, while the rest of us dispensed moral indignation and not much else.

During the year 1940 we sent 1500 planes to England. That is at the rate of 125 a month. The English paid for the planes. They also put up \$500,000,000 to finance the construction of new plants. It has been suggested that there is something wrong with this deal. It looks to me like an excellent arrangement for us. Anyway, I don't see any charity in it.

It seems to me that, in this matter of plane production, we have been asleep at the switch. We not only haven't produced any planes, to speak of; those we have produced aren't good enough to meet the sort of competition they are going to be up against in Europe. There is only one American job which belongs in the same class with a Spitfire. They were testing this job when I left England. It is a good plane but it isn't quite good enough. It is 10 miles an hour too slow; it lacks fire power; it needs armor; it should have more

altitude. Our boys, who did a bit of boasting about this kite, have had to revise their claims.

This is a blitzkrieg. We must think in terms of today, not the next generation.

Henry Ford claims he could make 1,000 planes a day in his plant alone. All I can say is: What the hell are we waiting for?

Some of our people think that, before taking sides in this conflict, we should ask the English to state their war aims. They are also worrying about war aims for the United States. The answer is simple. The British are fighting to stop dictators who have gone amok and threaten to overrun the earth. We are helping them. That's all there is to it. When these aggressors have been stopped, we can begin to worry about the bright new world where evil will be no more and where goodness will win its just reward. Until then, the British—and all who have a community of interest with them—had better keep their minds on their work.

There is no point in getting sentimental about this thing. I think we are making a great mistake in attempting to make this another Holy War in defense of democracy. The English like to romanticize about their wars. They are really fighting for their lives and, in fighting for their lives, they are probably fighting for ours. I don't see why they have to have any other objective. I don't



know of any better thing to fight for than the right to live.

The people who worry about war aims also seem to think that, if the British weren't so blood-thirsty, it would be possible to negotiate some kind of a peace with the Axis. That, in my humble opinion, is nonsense. The British have committed many blunders in the last few years but they aren't crazy enough to commit the final blunder of caving in now—no matter how black the outlook may be. It took the British eight years to get themselves organized for defense; if they ever let go, until victory is achieved, they are sunk. Hitler can afford to accept almost any kind of a peace. The British would demobilize; the lion would go to sleep again; Britain's remaining allies would evaporate. Then, some day, over some trivial incident, Hitler would strike again. He almost got Britain the last time; there wouldn't be any doubt about the result if he could get them to drop their guard and give him another chance.

It sounds plausible to say "we shall have to negotiate a peace eventually; why not do it now?" Certainly, but it makes a lot of difference who calls the tune. It hurts me to say it, but I don't see any way out of this war for the British except to fight it through to the bitter end. And that, in my opinion, is just what they will do. One side or the other has got to be vanquished. The stalemate which so

intrigues Colonel Lindbergh would be the worst possible solution. Rather an Axis victory now than a stalemate which would be only a breathing spell leading to a new and greater conflict later on. The Axis nations have made a bid for world supremacy. The challenge must be met. Britain and her supporters have a good chance of stopping the Axis now. They are finished if they ever let down.

The British know that. They won't let down. Churchill said they would fight on the beaches, in the fields, and in the streets. They will do more than that. They will, if necessary, fight on the seas and across the seas. Hitler may succeed in occupying the British Isles but that will not be the end of the war. The Navy will steam away. So will the hundreds of merchant vessels constantly lying in port in Britain. They will be loaded with military men and technicians chosen for their value in carrying on the struggle. The bombers will fly away to new bases. Fighter pilots will hurl themselves and their machines to destruction against the ranks of the invader. Everything that cannot be removed will be destroyed. Starvation and serfdom will be the lot of those who remain, but the war will go on. I don't think Hitler is going to take Britain but this is what will happen if he does.

Lord Lothian, in the last words which he addressed to the American people, said that in backing the British we were not backing quitters.

Lothian was exactly right. The British may be slaughtered; their air force may be wiped out; their cities may be destroyed; their army may be driven into the sea. They will carry on. They will fight, if need be, around the world and back again. That sun which never set on an empire at peace will never set on an empire at war.

**THEY'LL NEVER QUIT.**

THE END



